

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF *R. B. A. Y. 22.*  
L O R D S T A N T O N.  
A N O V E L.

By a Gentleman of the *Middle Temple*,  
Author of the TRIAL, or History of CHARLES  
HORTON.

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I N F O U R V O L U M E S.

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V O L. I.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
LORD STANTON.



LETTER I.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esq.

W<sup>H</sup>Y don't you write to me?  
Sensible that your sprightly  
and entertaining epistles constitute the greatest part of my pleasures here, is it not cruel in you to withhold them? But I suppose some affair of gallantry takes up your time so much that you have none to spare, even though it should be employed in writing to a friend. It is most likely, James, that I

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shall stand in need of your advice very shortly. I am about to enter into a scene that my former retirement, and my present disposition render me very unfit for. I will explain myself.

Though nearly of age and possessed of a title, I have but very disagreeable prospects before me; for my unhappy father's propensity for play, involved his estate very deeply. He died when I was about fourteen; and these six years have not been able to restore it to half its original worth, though managed with the utmost prudence and frugality by my mother, whose care and tenderness I shall never be able to repay. At this moment it does not amount to 2500 *l.* a year, and my mother's jointure of 800 *l.* is to be paid out of it. The remainder will never do to support a title, and the rank in life which I ought to hold. This has been the principal cause of the obscurity in which I have been bred. I speak comparatively; for though I have received

## LORD STANTON.

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received all those instructions which the best masters have been able to give me, yet those advantages, which an acquaintance with life, manners and men procure, have been denied to me. My knowledge therefore is confined to a small compass, and from books only have I received any information. May not they frequently lead me astray? May they not be partial? I have long wished to have an opportunity of inspecting mankind more closely. As often as my mother heard me express any desire of that nature, she still found means to make me lay it aside, and to keep me with her. My respect and fondness for so worthy a parent, prevented my causing her the least uneasiness, and I willingly complied with her request to remain at Stanton Hall. The instructions which our mutual friend Thomson has bestowed on me, and the tenderness of my mother, began to attach me to this place. I grew fond of reading; and retirement was pro-

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per for the indulgence of my favourite pursuits. I no more found myself inclin'd to quit the spot where I had been bred, and to which I was so well accustomed. I began to put in practice the maxims I had read; and content with my situation, wished for no more. That philosophy which taught me to be satisfied with the enjoyment of what I possessed, was the most profitable and pleasing study I could pursue. Though "in the May of youth and bloom  
"of lustihood," my thoughts took a more serious turn than those of my expectations in life generally have, and I had a calmness and quiet of soul that I thought no accident could disturb. It is not my lot to be permitted to enjoy it as I wish. My mother perceived my situation, and has waked me from the repose so pleasing, and, I may add, so necessary to my disposition. Necessary, because I am habituated to it, and shall cut but an aukward figure when obliged to act any other part than that  
which

which I have so long studied. That mother, whose requests I have ever made the laws to regulate my conduct, and afford her pleasure by my obedience to them, has insisted on it, and I must quit Stanton Hall.

“It is time,” said she to me the other day, “my dear boy, to shake off this lethargy that I see, with so much pain, creeping on you. You were not born to remain buried in a library; and the rust you contract by being too long in a state of inactivity here, may never be clean’d off, though hereafter you may be well accustomed to the world. You have pored over books long enough; you have acquired theoretical knowledge, it is necessary that you should put it in practice. You may be surprised at hearing me give you this advice, who have hitherto so eagerly repressed every desire you had formed of going abroad. But I had my reasons for it. You were too young; and though possessed of as good parts,

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“ and perhaps as well improved for your  
“ years as any young nobleman, you had  
“ not acquired solidity enough either to re-  
“ gulate yourself, or pay a proper regard  
“ to what a governor should recommend  
“ to you. And be assured that one lesson  
“ of prudence, which you may acquire  
“ yourself, will avail you more than all the  
“ instruction you may borrow from ano-  
“ ther. The greatest misfortune which you  
“ could have met with, would have been  
“ thrusting you into life too early, before  
“ your sense had sufficiently established it-  
“ self to point out to you good from evil;  
“ or your reason had acquired force enough  
“ to combat your vanity, and the passions  
“ that youth is most subject to. Every  
“ thing would have worn a face that was  
“ foreign to it. Men more artful, and longer  
“ accustomed to impose on unsuspecting  
“ youth, would have preyed upon you;  
“ they would have misled you by flattery,  
“ and her alluring voice would have been  
“ irre-



“irresistible. Too late for yourself you  
“might have hereafter repented of your  
“misconduct, which nothing but inexperience  
“led you into. The contrary is  
“now to be hoped and expected from  
“your improvements in learning, and the  
“increase of your reason. I who have  
“formerly persuaded you to stay with me,  
“am now the foremost to inspire you with  
“a desire of informing yourself of the nature  
“of that world, to which you have  
“been hitherto a stranger. I will even  
“treat you to go into it, convinced, that your  
“conduct will reflect honour on me as the  
“mother of so good, so virtuous a son.”

“All the praise, Madam, I may happily  
“acquire, will be certainly your due. You  
“who have instilled the lessons of virtue into  
“my soul, should receive the reward they  
“may deserve. But wherefore am I to be  
“torn from your side? Let me still be so  
“happy as to remain with you, watch your  
“declining age, and render you all those

“ little services that my duty and inclination would wish to perform.”

“ No,” replied she, “ I have a greater regard for your happiness and honour than my own satisfaction, great as it would be in having you with me. Besides, ever since your father’s death, I have been looking forward to this moment, and cannot suffer myself to be disappointed. I have secluded myself from the world, from all company, even from my most intimate friends, for your sake. It was my desire to keep you from public observation, and therein have I succeeded, for you are unknown. Your unhappy father’s fondness for play reduced his affairs. The fortune he has left you is by no means adequate to the dignity of your family or title, nor can you support it without some other assistance. It would be a very good opportunity to enhance your revenue, to apply to the study of the politics of the  
“ age,



“ age, and by espousing a minister’s cause,  
“ bask in the sun-shine of court favour,  
“ and enjoy some lucrative places. But  
“ I must own it would mortify me ex-  
“ tremely to see you dependent on the  
“ smile of a man that might be every way  
“ beneath you, except in the adventitious  
“ administration of public affairs, which  
“ perhaps the voice of a party, rather than  
“ his merit, raised him to. Besides, it is  
“ contrary to my notions to see peers ac-  
“ cept places and pensions. They who  
“ are the great and hereditary council to  
“ the crown should be ever independent,  
“ nor, through fear of losing some profita-  
“ ble place, be instrumental in the pre-  
“ venting of the execution of justice to the  
“ people; or, on the other hand, bribed  
“ by the wealth of their sovereign, look  
“ only to the emolument they are to ex-  
“ pect, in consequence of their indeviating  
“ compliance to his will, and basely sur-  
“ render those rights it is their business

“and duty to defend. This road there-  
“fore, which I think must be attended  
“with dishonour, I would have you avoid.  
“There is another, which, although fre-  
“quently trodden, you might succeed in.  
“I mean marriage. Many rich parents  
“will give all their wealth to confer a title  
“on their daughter. You may almost de-  
“pend on meeting fortune in this way.  
“But I wish to see you happy as well as  
“rich: but that will scarcely be your lot if  
“you marry a woman merely for the sake  
“of money. That alone will not yield  
“true peace; it may answer many of the  
“purposes of life, but not all. And the  
“wealth that hurries you into the com-  
“mission of irregular, or bad actions, is  
“more to be dreaded than a mediocrity  
“which will preserve your honour and  
“your happiness. I would therefore have  
“you hide that title which sets you above  
“the generality of mankind, and, mingling  
“with them, see without prejudice or dis-  
“guise,

“guise, the springs that set the great machine in motion. Appear as a private gentleman. You are so little known, that it will be almost impossible to discover you; and that situation will afford you opportunities that in your own you could never have of seeing the world. Look out for a wife: if rich the better; if not, let her be of a good family, nor let her connections be a disgrace and reproach to you. But let your heart chuse her before you share your bed with her, and do not deceive yourself, by imagining you can enjoy happiness in the nuptial state, without affection. Your own judgment, my dear child, will assist you in the choice of a partner for life. Depend always upon my approbation. Your wife shall be esteemed and loved as my daughter; for the woman who makes you happy shall be doubly dear to me. The greatness of a fortune, though a very desirable object for you in your present situation,

“ tuation, will also introduce an extraordinary  
“ expence, and you will always find  
“ that a wife will assume a consequence in  
“ proportion to the dowry she brings you.  
“ Frugality and a proper œconomy should  
“ not be neglected or despised, even with  
“ the most ample fortune; though I would  
“ have all parsimony that borders on  
“ meanness as much shunned.”

In this manner, Hilgrove, did my worthy parent pursue her instructions to me, and lay down rules for my conduct. She acquainted me with the plan she had formed, and which I am to follow. That shall be the subject of another letter. In the mean time, farewell

STANTON.

LETTER

## LETTER. II.

To the same.

**T**HIS expedition of mine is not to be delay'd. The commencement of the diversions in the metropolis in this season of the year, is to be also the opening of my campaign. I am to go abroad—don't stare—I mean the news-papers are to inform the world, that “ Lord Stanton set  
“ out for France with an intent to make a  
“ three years tour on the continent, and  
“ we hear that his lordship intends to view  
“ the seat of the war between the Russians  
“ and Turks before his return.” This done, I equip myself as a Mr. Benson—take a servant who is a stranger to me, and under this appearance begin my operations; in which, dear James, I must ask your advice, and employ you as principal engineer. For to tell you the truth, I am entirely unacquainted with the nature  
of

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of the service I am going upon, and many difficulties arise in speculation which will retard my progress. I don't like the scheme at all; I had much rather stay at home; this disguise is displeasing to me; it is not honest, and it favours of imposition. I will take care that no-body suffers by it however. There is something of Don-Quixotism in this matter, and I only want a proper 'squire to be a knight errant. I really consider my going to look for a wife, full as absurd and ridiculous as his attacking the windmills. But it is my mother's desire, and that reflection shall stifle all the repugnances I might otherwise have to this scheme. But in what manner shall I proceed? I am diffident, modest, humble, and reserved; slow of speech, and unfurnished with a set of ideas adapted to the capacity of modern females. Had I some of the heroines of antiquity to talk to, I might, perhaps, make a better figure than I shall do now.

Both



Both my manners and my notions would have suited the year 1550. The little I have seen, little enough that is, and all I read conspire to make me think the fairer sex full of subtlety and hypocrisy, cunning, artful, and vain; governed by the most fantastic passions, yet with skill enough to conceal them from public view. What a character! How shall I be able to penetrate through the veil that cunning and artifice, assisted by a fair face and a charming person, may throw over the worst and most detestable sentiments. As I must chuse a wife, I should like her to possess opinions correspondent to mine; and how shall I ever be able to find out whether those she may assume, to please me perhaps, are real or no. Shall I have patience to investigate her character, and unravel all those mysterious turnings and windings that she may chuse to lead me. Suppose I should fall in love, and my reason be blinded by passion. What am I to

I to do then? She will be the most amiable and most worthy in my eyes, which in that case will have neither discernment nor distinction. You will tell me that love will render me blind to her imperfections, and that alone will be sufficient to make me happy. But the transport of passion will subside at some time or another, then I must give my reason and judgment room; and when I am thus capable of making use of my senses, my abhorrence will rise in proportion to my former infatuation, and I shall be ever after unhappy, if I do not find her equal to the image my fancy had formed in the moments of fondness. I am very dubious of my own strength; and imagine from the little knowledge I have of my own heart, that its tenderness and softness will be the means of leading me into many improper connections. Nor do I think that I should refuse innocence and virtue without a fortune, though the situation of my  
affairs



affairs absolutely forbid such a union. I begin to envy you that apathy with regard to women, that I have often reproved you for, and now think it would qualify me for succeeding better than all the talents I am master of. There is no time for deliberation left, nor can I put any of those good lessons in practice which you have from time to time given me in matters of gallantry. I cannot conceive how it comes to pass, that our notions and manners differ so widely who were in part educated together, and drank instruction from the same spring. I am surpris'd that your volatility did not correct my phlegm, or that my gravity had not some effect upon you. I must see you if possible, and endeavour to imitate that conduct which makes you so acceptable to the ladies. Be not sparing in your instructions; admit me as your pupil, and initiate me in all the mysteries of the worship now paid to the modern Venuses, and by which a lady may be won.

Their

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Their ceremonies are so numerous and various that they are not to be easily learned. You will tell me very justly that I may despair of succeeding when I am thus intimidated. Farewell.

Yours STANTON.



L E T T E R. III.

To Lord STANTON.

**T**HY two curious epistles I received, my dear Stanton, and cannot think thy scheme a good one by any means. It is a woman's; and though I have as good an opinion of thy mother as any other woman breathing, yet trust me, you are beginning at the wrong end of the matter. Who in the name of wonder that went to seek a wife, would conceal his title but yourself? Do you put a naked hook into the water in hopes to catch fish? They leap at the gilded fly, or seize the alluring bait.

bait. This then is thy case. Thou art a pretty fellow I confess, and may do a great deal in thy proper person; but in the way of matrimony you will effect nothing, especially with the rich, who want some other equivalents for fortune than a handsome fellow which they can have at any other opportunity. Wast thou as old as time, as wrinkled as a baboon; were thy body a compound of all deformity, and thy mind as void of every virtue as thy person of beauty; yet wouldst thou find women who would give thee themselves and fortunes for the sake of wearing the title that covered thee. What will not a woman do for rank and precedence? What will she not sacrifice to ambition? How can you expect to succeed when you lay aside your principal recommendation? If you want a wife, Stanton, that must repair the breaches in your fortune, carry your title along with you; it is a passport that will ever ensure you a welcome reception :

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tion: all knees will bow to you: all mouths will open in your praise: the women will flatter and smile upon you; and even your follies, for Lords cannot all be wise, shall be the subjects of public applause. Here is a delicious scene: there is more yet untold. Many a lovely woman will wish to have an affair with Lord Stanton, who would turn up her nose at plain Mr. Benson. The reputation of such a thing is of more value with them than the pleasure. When this is the case, why will you seek a wife—

Is this an age to buckle with a bride?  
 A sober man like thee to change his life,  
 What fury would possess thee with a wife?  
 Art thou of every other death bereft,  
 No knife, no rats-bane, no kind halter left?

No, no, enjoy life while you may.  
 Youth courts you, the time is propitious.  
 No more the restraint of sour pedantry  
 awes the minds of the young and gay.  
 this



This is an age of pleasure.—Trust me you will soon know the world when you once enter into it; faith, it is so uniform, that it requires but little study to make you acquainted with it. You want my advice, how to proceed in this attempt of yours to get a wife. Was it required for any other purpose, you might obtain it with greater ease: for to tell you the truth, it is a road I never travelled. I may hereafter, perhaps, venture on it; but like all other sinners I put the evil day as far from me as I can. But as you desire instruction, I must give it to you in the best manner I am able; for I cannot suffer the opinion you have conceived of my conduct in matters of gallantry to be diminished, by refusing to let you know as much of the matter as I do myself. In the first place, you must always—Upon my soul there are so many things to be done, that I can't tell where to begin—You must—In short you must do as I do, and how that

that is I can't tell; but I know that I have not had occasion to hang or drown myself by any lady's cruelty. The man who would succeed with a woman must have a good share of sense, and but few passions, and those entirely under the command of his reason. He can then always pretend to passion, without suffering the weaknesses and inconveniences which ever attend the reality. He is always master both of himself and her, always ready to take those advantages which she may afford him by finessing too much. Women are cunning, they are witty, they are versatile; but a man with a little patience will soon gain the ascendancy over them. It is also necessary he should suffer himself to be imposed on in some trifling things, as it will prevent a suspicion of his sagacity, which would put her on her guard, and make her use double caution. There is no such thing as giving you any lessons for your conduct; they must arise from events,  
and



and such will afford you the best instruction. All I can say to you is, that I do not like your scheme, and am sure that you will fail in it. Mark this prophecy: when it is fulfilled you will think of me. I figure to myself your appearance when addressing your divinity, and am ready to burst with laughter, to see you trembling, fearful; blushing, hesitating, stammering out some extraordinary fine speech, approaching with down-cast eyes the goddess of your wishes, who sits in state with a scornful air to receive the homage of her worshipper.—O Lord, this will never do! You remember what Don John in the *Chances* says to his friend who had been recommending him to a lady, as an honest, modest man. “That would be an “excellent character,” said he, “to obtain the place of parish constable with, “but it will never gain a woman.”

The ladies of this age are too wise to mind such antiquated notions. Be bold,  
and

and be successful. It is requisite that the men should anticipate their wishes, explain their thoughts, and act accordingly. It is really contrary to my own interest that I give you this counsel; you will be my rival, and, if we move in the same sphere, jostle me out. To your personal qualifications you should not join the finesse of art, or we shall have numberless rival queens contending for another Alexander. Farewel Stanton, let me hear how you proceed, and ever depend upon the assistance and friendship of thine,

JAMES HILGROVE.



#### LETTER IV.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esq.

**T**HIS goes from the metropolis, where I am happily arrived and settled under the name of George Benson. Thus hereafter, my dear James, you must address me,

me, and add an Esquire to it if you please. But as my settlement has been the effect of chance, it is necessary you should be acquainted with the manner of it.

I set out for Dover, accompanied by my servants, and there dismissed them, reserving one only to attend me, whose long-tried fidelity and discretion I could rely upon. They parted under a full conviction that I went for France, and I did not undeceive them. I went across the country to Southampton (now deserted of all company) there was no possibility of my being known, and from thence pursued the road to London. Previous to my quitting Dover, I called in Edward the man, whom I had chosen to attend me, and began to sound him, by enquiring whether he would rather return to Stanton Hall with the other servants, or go with me to France. He replied, that as it was left to his choice, he hoped it would not be presumptuous in him if he declared he would rather remain

with me, go where I would, and thought it an happiness to be permitted to stay with me. I told him of the dependance I had on his fidelity and secrecy, and dismissed him by desiring to see the other servants go off, and then to return to me. When he came back, after exciting his faith and honesty by promises of reward, and making him sensible of the trust to be reposed in him, I acquainted him with such parts of my scheme as tended to inform him of my design of changing my name and hiding my quality, and hinted to him the good opinion I had of him before I would have opened my mind to him. He appeared to be convinced of the honour, he said, I had done him, promised not to prove unworthy of my confidence, and then strutted off with as much dignity and self-complacency as you can well conceive. As the most difficult part of his task was to accustom himself, in the beginning, to change his mode of address to me, I was very apprehensive,  
to

to tell you the truth of the matter, that my Lord would burst out now and then : but these were idle fears, for Edward's cautious gravity is not likely to fall into such mistakes. I had a mind to see the rooms, and whatever else was worthy inspection at Southampton, and therefore remained the greater part of the day there, and after dinner took the road for London. I put up at a little inn, as the weather was so bad there was no possibility of going on. Driven thither by the same cause, came Sir Thomas Mitcombe, with his daughter and sister. The arrival of a carriage, with a train of servants created a disturbance in a house that had not, in general, been accustomed to receive such customers. The noise and confusion awakened my curiosity : and I rang for Edward, who informed me of the title and disagreeable situation of the new comers, for I had secured the best room in the house, and consequently they could not be as well accommodated as they

could wish. Difference, and what is called inconvenience, in apartments, I am too much of a philosopher to mind, and as there were ladies in the case, I resolved to cede those advantages my priority of arrival had conferred on me, and sent Edward with my compliments, and an entreaty to accept of the room I had chosen. Sir Thomas returned with the man, and thanked me very politely for my civility, and accepted the offer of the room, but insisted on it that I should not quit it, and that I should sup with them. We exchanged some civil speeches, which custom authorises upon these occasions, but which nevertheless I cannot help thinking very absurd and unnecessary, and he went out to bring his daughter and sister; on their arrival I was forced to submit to more compliments, and at length we subsided into an agreeable conversation. As the storm continued with very great violence, we congratulated ourselves on our situation, which



which though none of the most elegant, yet was comfortable, and preserved us from the severity of the weather. I think it is Thomson who calls it the luxury of sleep; when you hear the tempest roaring around you, and you enjoy the conscious satisfaction of being safe and exempt from all disagreeable and dangerous oppositions to it. It is a selfish reflection at best, nevertheless, for humanity must represent to us that there may be at that instant many an "houseless child of woe" who is forced to sustain the pitiless pelting of the storm. But those cogitations are lost in the more agreeable certainty of our own security. Whether it was this that gave a turn to our conversation I know not, but it was maintained with much sprightliness on the side of the ladies, and Sir Thomas and I came in sometimes for our share of it. You will expect, I presume, some description of them. The baronet is above the middle age; comely in his person, and

agreeable in his manner; with little more knowledge than that which is acquired by a long residence among men, he speaks sensibly upon most subjects, but will not venture out of his depth upon any account. His caution gives him the semblance of wisdom, which even the reality, he is sometimes in want of. As his knowledge and mine lay so far asunder, he was the most agreeable companion I could meet with, and he was very communicative. Finding that I had never been in London, he declared himself my patron, gave me a very pressing invitation to his house, in which the ladies joined. But there is an haughtiness at the bottom of his character, though he strives to disguise it, that appeared very plainly to me. He is a great admirer of forms, and adheres very closely to them; is fond of boasting of his connections, and has already informed me of what a number of peers I stand a chance of seeing at his house. He is going up to meet the parliament,



ament, and he has not failed to hint, that he has great weight in a certain place. You may suppose that I was not deficient in expressing my gratitude to him for his kindness, and declaring my intentions of accepting his invitation. His sister is of the same family, as may be easily perceived by her delighting in the consequence of their ancestors. The knight prides himself on his own importance; but his sister, who is elder than him, relates, with great satisfaction, the history of one of their progenitors, who was privy-counsellor to Henry VII. of another who was particularly respected by Queen Elizabeth, and two or three who espoused the royal cause in the civil wars, she speaks of with great rapture. However, you may perceive that the more remote they are, the more she honours them; and as they approach the present age they considerably lessen in value; she has carried up her accounts of them much farther than my memory will extend, but

she has their pictures in her cabinet, which she has graciously pleased to promise she will favour me with a sight of. She has already declared her approbation of my gravity, and is convinced that I must be a very good young man from my fondness for antiquity, and my regard to the manners and wisdom of my ancestors. This favourable opinion arose from my having listened very attentively to her story, and with the greatest complacency. Though her niece and brother often interrupted her, yet they could not make me withdraw my attention from her tale, which, to say the truth of it, was very prolix, nay, I even helped her out in some of the chronological parts of her story, when her memory failed her. She is single, and not handsome by any means.

Now will you laugh, James, at my being talked to death by an old woman ; but it was no such thing I assure you : such is the pliability of my temper, that I could  
even

even take pleasure in hearing her recount what gave her so much evident satisfaction. The amusement is innocent, her design laudable, for I cannot help thinking that the ancients are more worthy imitation than the moderns will be in time to come, when they in their turn shall be numbered with the ages past.

I will not be so uncharitable to think that the interruptions she met with from her niece proceeded from petulance, or impatience; on the contrary, I believe that she is very fond of her aunt, who chuses to be called Mrs. Mitcombe, and who has also a great affection for her, and supplies the place of her mother, who is dead, with real tenderness. I suppose you begin to be impatient for a description of Miss Mitcombe. Upon my word, Hilgrove, she will suffer by my attempting it. She is a lovely girl, but my paper will not hold out, and I must defer it to another opportunity. Farewell; thine truly,

GEORGE BENSON.

## LETTER V.

To the same.

“**W**HAT does this foolish fellow mean? of what significance is an account of a proud knight, or a legendary old maid to me? Where is the girl? What of her? What colour are her eyes, and her hair? Has she good teeth, a fair skin, fine shape?”

“Stay, stay, dear James, don’t be in such a hurry, and you shall know every thing directly.”

Should you not interrogate me thus, were we to converse together? I will satisfy your impatience.

Miss Mitcombe is approaching twenty one; her shape easy and genteel; her features good and regular, with fine blue eyes. She is the handsomest woman I have yet seen. She has an elegance in her  
manner

manner that is extremely pleasing, and her education has not been neglected. She has acquired an ease in her conversation and deportment, from being early initiated in the ways of the great city, that gives her a superiority in conversation, as it enables her to deliver her sentiments without being embarrassed. What an advantage, none but those who have suffered from an unhappy diffidence can possibly explain. I am a sufficient example of it. Her youth and gaiety induce her to talk of public freedoms and places of resort frequented by the fashionable and gay of both sexes, and plead her excuse at the same time. She has a very good notion of music, and sings agreeably. These are the outlines of the characters of this family; but do not pay such a compliment to my sagacity and penetration as to suppose that I found all this out in the first evening's conversation I had with them. No, this is the opinion I have formed from the *traits*.

I have observed in their different characters in a communication of ten days. But to proceed methodically, if I recollect right, I began to give you a description of them at the Sun.

We enjoyed a supper, by the assistance of Sir Thomas's servants, tolerably well dressed; and even the little inconveniencies we were put to, but served to increase our merriment and sprightliness. At an early hour we retired, and I began to muse on the occurrences of the day, and the advantage Sir Thomas's introduction might be to me in the prosecution of my scheme. With this in my head I went to bed, and lay awake some time; Miss Mitcombe's agreeable figure and sensible conversation returned strongly to me when alone, and as I imagined that the family was wealthy from what I had seen and heard, conjectured that my search might be quickly at an end, for I found in our discourse that she was Sir Thomas's only child.



child. With these meditations I was lulled asleep, but had hardly closed my eyes when a dismal noise awaked me again, and I thought I could distinguish the sound of fire. Miss Mitcombe's safety next to my own, or rather preferable to any thought of my own, first presented itself to me. I snatched my cloaths, and run towards that chamber I had resigned to her, and which lay at the other end of the house from that which I had taken possession of. The flames had broke out in some stables that joined to that part of the house, and her chamber was in imminent danger. I assure you my conduct was actuated by mere humanity; and the consideration, even in that moment of confusion, that a young lady could not extricate herself well from such a disagreeable and dreadful situation, hurried me on to endeavour to preserve her. I happily succeeded. She had been alarmed at the sound, and had just slipped on a petticoat, and



and thrown a gown about her, when she heard me at the door, which she immediately opened. Her aunt lay in the same room with her. I intreated her to hasten away to preserve herself, for she did not think the danger so near, and catching the young lady in my arms, conveyed her to a place of safety, and then returned for Mrs. Mitcombe, whom I conducted to her niece: by this time their apartment was all on fire, and it would have been difficult to have got them out of it had they staid any longer. I can guess at your thoughts when reading this relation; and knowing you so well as I do, can imagine what your notions would have been in having so charming a girl in such loose attire. But believe me I entertained no thoughts that were not pure as the morning light, though her hurry and fright occasioned the discovery of many beauties that otherwise had been concealed. Sir Thomas Mitcombe was alarmed at the  
cry

cry of fire, and rushed into his daughter's apartment, which he found in flames, and himself almost suffocated by the volumes of smoke that issued from it. The most dismal apprehensions succeeded, and he imagined her to have perished; but he was soon relieved and conducted to her. When they were a little composed after their meeting, which bespoke their affection, they loaded me with thanks. However, I endeavoured to wave the subject by asking Sir Thomas to assist me in striving to get the flames extinguished; and leaving the ladies in my room we went together. His servants were by this time all up; and the people of the house joining, the fire was soon got under, and in a short time totally quenched. Happily there was little damage done, except the universal fright, and the loss of one of Sir Thomas's horses: the rain, which fell in great quantities, having wetted the straw with which the stables were thatched, and by that means prevented the fire from spreading;

spreading; but it produced so much smoke that it appeared as if the house was all on fire.

The ladies were so greatly terrified, they declared they could not think of going to bed again. A fire was prepared, and we sat all together till day-break, when some coffee was got ready, and we were about to set off, and I ordered Edward to get the horses out; but Sir Thomas insisted I should take a seat in his coach; and the ladies joined so earnestly in the intreaty, there was no possibility of refusing it, and in I got. Behold me now in the road I wished to be, with a genteel family whose countenance would introduce me in my assumed character, and give me the consequence I should otherwise want, or should be the longer arriving at without it. That evening brought us to London. As I was a total stranger I was not permitted to leave them; they forced me to take a bed that night, and indeed Sir Thomas offered me the use of his house while I staid

staid in town; but as that would confine me too much, I declined it. They have overwhelmed me with civilities, and have accompanied me to every place of public amusement. Scenes in which, thou Hilgrove, hast acted most conspicuous parts, and shone the gayest of the gay. A description of them to thee would be needless; but to me they afforded great entertainment, as they had all the charms of novelty to recommend them. I am lodged near Sir Thomas's, where I dine very frequently, and seem to be a great favourite with the whole family. I have been introduced to the several persons who came to visit Sir Thomas upon his arrival in town. As I am very reserved, I have more time to observe the different characters of the visitors, and make my remarks on them. For my part I am looked upon as a poor stupid country squire, with just sense enough to keep myself out of the kennel, prevent the coaches running over me,

me, or take my hand off a red hot iron without bidding. I have the great satisfaction of hearing arguments maintained by people that have not the least notion of the subject on which they hold forth. A beau, with a great deal of dexterity, mangles a point of faith; and some well powdered parsons discuss a topic of gallantry, with a peculiar spirit. You see I am improving in knowledge; for I could not till now believe that such things were. I shall continue to inform you how I go on. I wish you were in town.

Yours,

GEORGE BENSON.



## LETTER VI.

To Mrs. ADDERLEY.

**I** Am arrived in town, my dear Bell, and as I promised will constantly write to you. As a proof of my sincerity and  
good

good intention to continue this agreeable correspondence, you see I begin already ; but to let you know the real motive, though great as my regard for you is, yet something more material to my happiness, which I cannot safely repose in any body else, obliges me to write to you. I left you with a total indifference for the whole male sex ; but a storm and a fire have removed it ; at least, if I can judge by the symptoms that I feel, it must be so : I speak in riddles, but I will explain myself. So violent a storm overtook us on the road from Southampton, that we were obliged to put up at a very small obscure house on the road ; we were shewn into a little nasty room, which was the best that the people had ; they said, a young gentleman who came in just before had engaged the best parlor. While we were lamenting this unlucky circumstance, his servant came by his direction to offer us his room, which was accepted, and then.

I saw



I saw him; his name is Benson, and, as we hear, is of a middling fortune in the west of England. Thus much for his circumstances; but I cannot describe him with the same ease. I will make the story short, by telling you that he is handsomer than Sir Edward Wilmington, whom I thought the prettiest man I ever saw, and whom you have heard me speak better of than any other of my lovers. I was surpris'd when I saw him, and can't resist giving you some little account of his person, for that is the best excuse for my behaviour, and the present confession of my sentiments. He is above the middle size, his shape easy and extremely genteel; he is very well proportioned, and that makes his height appear less remarkable; his face is oval; his eyes black and piercing; his hair, which flows in careless ringlets over his shoulders, is of a dark brown; he has a charming mouth, and teeth naturally white; his voice is sweetness

ness itself: but would you believe it? this man has never been in London; nevertheless, he has all that easy, natural politeness which makes a man agreeable; in him it is occasioned by a complacency, and good temper; whilst in others, it is the effect of art and education, and they make use of it as a veil to cover either defects, or to enable them to obtain their wishes: he is extremely sensible, though he seldom speaks; but when he does, I wish he would never cease, though I myself were to be debared of the privilege of talking, so invaluable to our sex. But to drop my description and proceed with my story. My papa kept him to sup with us, and we spent the evening very agreeably. In the middle of the night we were alarmed with the cry of fire. I had hardly slipped on my gown, when I heard his voice at the door, entreating me to take care of myself. In my fright I made no scruple of committing myself to his care, and he conveyed

conveyed me to a place of safety. My father who apprehended that I was suffocated in the smoke and fire which had burst into my room, was so much rejoiced at finding me safe under Mr. Benson's care, that he declared he never should forget his benefactor. The next day he brought him along with us, and has been here every day since. We have gone to all the publick places to shew them to him, and make this city as agreeable as possible. But the appearance of Mr. Benson has given no small uneasiness to my train. It is good to keep them in mind of what their duty is. Sir Edward looks very grave, sighs frequently, and reproaches me with his eyes; I will take care that shall be all, for he shan't speak to me till he recovers his usual vivacity. He first got an opportunity, as he was putting me into the coach, to whisper with a sigh, "Ah Emily, have you forgot me then in this short retreat?"

I broke

I broke from him, and got into the carriage as fast as I could ; but he shan't catch me again. The sullen Lovemore eyes them both with a menacing look, as if he would cut their throats ; but I do not think he is so fierce as he looks to be. Beau Filmer is more entertaining than any of them upon the subject.

" My dear Miss Mitcombe, where did you pick up this savage ? "

" You would give your ears, Filmer, to be half so handsome. "

" No, positively no. Comparisons you know are—but—the man is well enough, and will be a little more human by and by. Did you ever see such hair ? Oh it is quite intolerable. I will absolutely send *Courtois* to him to-morrow morning. Really I shall be ashamed to be seen in his company with that head. "

" That head will make you ashamed every hour of your life. "

" Yes

“Yes, as I live it will—but you fine women are so insatiably ambitious, that there is no such thing as living for you.”

“Ambitious! How, pray?”

“Not contented with tyrannizing over us *hommes de ville*, you bring in the savages to tame them, and by your cruelty, I suppose, intend to make us wild, and send us to replenish the country.—This is the power of bright eyes.”

He received a tap with my fan and a smile, and marched off in triumph. But you will desire to know what this Mr. Benson is doing all this time.—That is a question I cannot answer. It would be excessively agreeable to me if I could make a conquest of his heart, for thou knowest, “My pride is, to hold all mankind in my chain.”

If I was to give way, or listen to the insinuations of my vanity, I should imagine these eyes had some effect upon him.—

But

But I fear to indulge myself in the thought. 'Tis true, he addresses himself almost entirely to me, but then he has few other acquaintance. He still talks to me as calmly and indifferently as if I was not a toast; or as he does to my aunt, whose good graces he possesses in an eminent degree, for he listens with the utmost patience to her antiquated stories, treats her with the greatest respect, and pays her every attention. The other day when Beau Filmer was rallying her on her taste for antiquity, and had turned the laugh against her, he took him so shortly, so severely, and so sensibly, that the poor beau was glad to discontinue his raillery.—But how charming did the amiable youth appear at that moment! the blush of diffidence colour'd his cheek, his eyes sparkled with unusual vivacity, whilst conscious virtue heighten'd every perfection. Nor do I think any thing but his love for justice, and to oppose the partial ridicule of Filmer, could have



so far overcome his natural modesty and reserve as to force him to deliver his sentiments in public. Sir Edward, who was present, joined Mr. Benson in opinion, and justified my aunt's taste; but her gratitude was reserved, and indeed due only to the latter. In what warm terms did she speak of him in private! She is sure, she says, he must possess the best heart in the world. I have the greatest opinion of her good sense and penetration, but it was quite unnecessary for her to say any thing to me in his praise. Now, after all, my dear Bell, if his regard to my aunt's judgment should only be a scheme to get at my heart, what would you say? I hope it may turn out so, as I wish to secure him before he gets loose in this town. I have scribbled my paper out, and must therefore conclude myself yours, as usual,

EM. MITCOMBE.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VII.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

**M**R. George Benson Esquire, I am your most humble and obedient servant.—Thus you see I conclude my letter in the first line of it—A very pretty metamorphosis truly.—A peer dwindled down to a squire of low degree.—Well such things have happened. The stories of Jove's amours with Europa and Leda, and all those pretty transformations of antiquity, will find credit with me for the future, since you have undergone this change for love—love! no hang it you are not honestly in love either, or else it would be excusable—Take my word for it that you will never meet the wife you want in London. You may find some imaginary heroine in the circulating libraries that may suit your sentiments and taste, for unless the Parthenissas of old are restored again, I cannot believe you will meet a mate. You

may remember the many conversations we have had on the subject. You ever spoke of and described human nature as it ought to be; but I knowing it better, always dress'd it in the passions, the desires, the frailties ever attendant on it. Yet large as the train is that follows a pretty woman, I am very willing at all times to make her mistress over me for a while. To tell you the truth of the matter, I should only chuse a temporary queen, for rule they will upon every occasion. If I were in London as you wish, I should be of little service to you, for you would not follow my rules and prescriptions, therefore I am better where I am. An odd affair detains me here, or I would go up to town nevertheless. As I am in Thompson's neighbourhood your letters have been communicated to him, and he joins me in opinion that your course will not be long. He seems to think that this extraordinary attention to the young lady's safety proceeded from

from other motives than mere humanity. If you are determined to have a wife, the sooner you take one the better, and end the matter at once. I suppose you will get a good fortune with her, and the Baronet will have no objection to making his daughter a Lady. Settle the affair and remain no longer in obscurity. Make an ample and voluntary confession that Miss Mitcombe has made an impression upon you. If she has, and is as wealthy as you desire, why should not you? I am called away, and must break off. Farewell till next time,

JAMES HILGROVE.



L E T T E R VIII.

TO MRS. ADDERLEY.

ONE cannot shew an handsome fellow in this city without causing innumerable enquiries. Who do you think bounced into my dressing room yesterday morning?

D 3

morning? You won't guess, dear Bell, in half an hour.—Lady Bab. Arnold.

“ So Mitcombe,” said she, throwing herself into a chair, with that happy familiarity which conciliates every thing, and shews at the same time her superiority, and the condescension she was so graciously pleased to exert towards me, in communicating so freely with me. “ So, Mitcombe, I suppose I was the last person “ you expected to see.”

“ I really must confess this is an honour “ by no means expected, but—

“ I saw you at the play t'other night, “ and I could not forbear calling on you.”

“ Your Ladyship makes me extremely “ happy.”

“ You look charmingly, indeed, child ; “ I suppose you took a great deal of exercise in the country, to improve your “ complexion in this manner.”

“ A little does one good.”

“ I see

"I see Sir Edward's still in your train:  
 "You will reward his passion with your  
 "hand at last."

I remained silent.

"Well, he's a constant Philander—A  
 "second Oroondates. — But that trifling  
 "Filmer remains with you yet—he's a mere  
 "dangler.—You're a perfect monopolizer  
 "of all the pretty fellows. But what new  
 "one is this you have listed, that made his  
 "appearance with you at Drury Lane.  
 "He is a stranger, is not he?"

The whole intention of her Ladyship's visit was now explained, and great as her curiosity was, I determined to disappoint her: not that I should have been pleased at being served so myself, but I penetrated into her design, and know what her character is; "He is a stranger  
 "but just come to London for the first  
 "time."



“ I thought so by his staring about so  
 “ much—What part did he come from ?  
 “ has he a good fortune ?”

“ He is my father’s acquaintance, my  
 “ Lady, and in compliance to his desire,  
 “ he accompanies me ; I know otherwise  
 “ very little of him.”

“ Ah Mitcombe, that you must, or I am  
 “ much mistaken — Come come, confess,  
 “ he is the favourite.”

“ I cannot confess any such thing, Lady  
 “ Bab, I assure you.”

“ Let it be how it will, you must not  
 “ engross him entirely—You must let him  
 “ come amongst us.”

“ If it was as your Ladyship says, I  
 “ should be afraid of his meeting with su-  
 “ perior attractions, and I should run a  
 “ chance of losing him ; but I can assure  
 “ you once more there is no such thing.”

She seemed displeased at my reserve,  
 communicated some secrets, as she called  
 them, of her admirers, but which all the  
 town

town knows ; assured me of her sincere friendship, and, after a deal of trifling chat, departed. No, no, Lady Bab, this scheme will not take. You know she is the most finished coquette of the age, has an immense fortune ; her elegant figure and her quality all conspire together to make her a very dangerous rival. I do not chuse to put even the chance I have of Mr. Benson's heart to the risque. If he was indifferent to me, as he really is not, I should not care, even then, that she should diminish my *suite*. But it would be intolerable to see the man whom I cannot help regarding with a favourable eye, seduced away from me. In all the chance, Bell, that I have of adding him to the number of my lovers, he still preserves a respectful politeness, and a distance that argues his coldness. Yet he has not wanted encouragement. I have quarrelled with Sir Edward before his face. I have affronted Lovemore, and neglected Filmer. Yet

nothing will do. Teach me, dear Bell, teach me to animate this icy statue—to warm, to melt him, and thus confess the power of charms that have not the least effect upon him. Of what use is beauty if we cannot captivate every one we please. However, one satisfaction is, that he seems as insensible to every body else as to me. He has very antiquated notions—But even absurdities would be pleasing from him. I have endeavoured to make him dress—but in vain. He preserves a neatness and plainness in his apparel that sets off his elegant person to the best advantage, and is superior to the finery of the rest of the world.

“ You make yourself singular, Mr. Benson,” said I to him ; “ you should do as the people about you do.”

“ How is that, Madam ?”

“ Dress a little smarter.”

“ You mean finer, Madam ; but if you have only that one objection of singularity

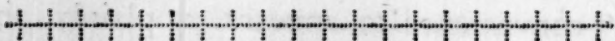
“ rity to bring against my present mode  
 “ of dressing, that will soon wear off, and  
 “ I shall remain unnoticed ; but it is much  
 “ more agreeable both to my temper and  
 “ convenience to appear thus plainly, than  
 “ to make myself ridiculous by assuming an  
 “ aukward finery, for aukward I must be  
 “ in any state but that I am used to.”

“ Your modesty is too great.”

In spite of my endeavours to alter him he continues in his old way. I will make one grand effort to bring him to an *ecclaircissement*. I don't believe that my father would be pleased at the matter, as his rank in life is much inferior to his views ; and Sir Edward has his good wishes, as he is in a very fair way of being a peer soon. Indeed I must own I should be much better pleased if Mr. Benson had some other title. But my heart has an interest at present in him that I do not chuse to relinquish. I am interrupted, and must bid you adieu. I have no other person in whom I can confide,

and therefore must trouble you with every thing that concerns thine,

EMILY MITCOMBE.



# LETTER IX.

TO MR. THOMPSON.

**H**ILGROVE informs me you have seen all my letters and I may write to you, my dear friend, without beginning to give you an account what motive drew me from the seat of my ancestors, and that retirement you thought me so inseparably attached to. I am pleased with having this opportunity of informing you of my notions, and the observations I may make, and receiving your remarks in return. I can form more sober reflections on the appearance that things wear to me, and communicate them to you with less restraint than to Hilgrove, whose passions and prejudices run away with his reason. What  
a pity

a pity that so good an heart as his should be so biaſſed from the road of truth ! In the fineſt and richeſt ſoils moſt weeds ſpring ; but I hope and truſt that his eyes will not be always ſhut to the path of reaſon from which he ſo blindly ſtrays. I cannot help thinking at ſome times, when he laughs at me for adhering to thoſe ſober notions which he has forſaken himſelf, that his heart cannot help approving the conduct I mean to purſue ; and that he is wronging his own principles all the time. Help to amend him with thy good advice, my dear Thompson. As to me, with every frailty and paſſion that is incident to human nature, I am endeavouring to avoid falling into thoſe exceſſes that the indulgence of them might occasion. I am at war with myſelf, and maintain a conflict in which, I hope, reaſon, virtue and religion will be triumphant. My ſole buſineſs is to ſupport myſelf in thoſe principles which I imbibed ſo early, and which I find ſo many



many snares and traps are laid here to subvert and overthrow: "*Quid verum atque decens curo ac rogo & omnis in hoc sum.*" Your opinion then, it seems, is, that Miss Mitcombe has smitten me. Your advice is that I should conclude matters as fast as possible. In the former I assure you that you are mistaken, in the latter you propose an impossibility. My attention to this young Lady arises from that politeness which many of the sex claim of us, and nothing more than humanity had a share in the happy consequence of my efforts to save her from the fire. I confess that I admired her then, nor have I any cause as yet to withdraw that admiration. The many polite and friendly distinctions, which I suppose her gratitude prompted her to offer, claims my regard and demands my friendship. She is very lovely; and though I see many amiable women, she has as many charms in my eyes as any of them. Yet I do not think I am enamoured

with her ; I feel none of those pains which I hear and read are attendant on that passion. I can bear to see her address'd by other men, for she has many lovers, without any uneasiness. — This is no sign of love. One of them, Sir Edward Wilmington, is a most deserving and accomplished young gentleman, and has been paying his addresses to her for some time ; they all look on me, I fear, in the light of a rival, and sorry, truly sorry should I be to give them any trouble on that account. Sir Edward seems to court my friendship — the rest shun me ; Mr. Lovemore looks on me with an eye of jealousy ; and Mr. Filmer, who is a very great beau, endeavours at raillery, which my gravity eternally disappoints. The friendship of Sir Thomas, and the partiality of his sister for me give a foundation to their suspicions. Without design I may create uneasiness to Sir Edward and Mr. Lovemore. But as for Filmer, I imagine he is too much captivated  
with

with himself, to feel from a disappointment of this kind, except his vanity should suffer. But Sir Edward seems really hurt, and I can perceive that he looks upon me as the cause of the treatment he meets with from Miss Mitcombe, which, to speak truth, is none of the genteelest. If there is at the bottom of her character, which I am not able to fathom as yet, a grain of coquetry, she would lose all my esteem: for nothing, in my opinion, can argue a more degenerate heart, or a worse understanding, than encouraging a number of admirers, only with a design to deceive them; for surely, without some encouragement, they would not pursue her. As yet I have no foundation for these suspicions: but a town life reconciles such notions to our women, who risque every thing to obtain adulation, and see themselves admired. What is the consequence?

Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,  
Young without lovers, old without a friend:  
A sop their passion, and their prize a sot,  
Alive ridiculous, and dead forgot.

This

This is the fate of a coquette. Besides, in my opinion, no man of delicacy can truly love a woman of that character. Innumerable and great must have been the concessions they made at different times to draw their lovers after them. Should you like to put that flower in your bosom which all the flies in the garden had blown on? But this is talking very much at random, for there is no sort of probability that I am more esteemed by Miss Mitcombe than any body else; and all the civility I meet with from her is only the effect of her complaisance, and in return for the little service I was happy enough to render her. Sir Thomas insists on my spending much of my time with him. I meet at his table a variety of characters, for he sees a great deal of company. Whatever their private manners may be, they all preserve a sameness in public, except one Mr. Asgil, who seems to be the only original among them, for I don't think he disguises his sentiments.

He

This

He appears to have a settled aversion to mankind in general. And though I cannot imagine any man to be a misanthrope from principle, yet, he carries every mark of it in his language and manners. Sir Thomas has a great regard for him, and he is the Apemantus of the company. To continue my description of him, will exceed the limits of my paper. You shall hear from me soon. Dear Thomson, adieu.

GEORGE BENSON.



## LETTER X.

TO MRS. ADDERLEY.

**R**EALLY Bell, this Benson steals on me much faster than I could wish. I can't drive him out of my head. I like him, and I like Sir Edward. Filmer is not disagreeable, his chat serves to kill the spleen. And then Sir Edward has been so long dangling after one, that one cannot think

think of parting with him. I like even the  
furlly humour of Lovemore, and confess, I  
have a pleasure in teasing him. Can I for-  
fake all these for one man? If I have him,  
I must—heigh ho! There's a sigh. His gra-  
vity terrifies me. But then he can be merry,  
and when he smiles I forget that ever he  
was grave. I begin to think with my  
aunt, that he must have a very good heart.  
I have heard a story of him that need not  
have been told me to increase my respect  
for his character. You must know, that  
when he first came to town, he was an entire  
stranger. My father would have had him  
stay in the house for a time, but this, under  
the pretence of giving too much trouble,  
he excused himself from, and Mitchel our  
house-keeper recommended him to one of her  
acquaintance, a widow who lets lodgings in  
a neighbouring street. Thus a relation  
of this story came to my ears; nay, I sent  
for the girl myself, and examined her be-  
fore my aunt. Receive the story as it was  
told.



told me, attended with every circumstance that could demand and gain belief. If any thing, I thought her too pretty, and too innocent.

“ My father,” madam, said she, “ is an  
“ officer, and all the little fortune he and  
“ my mother had went to purchase a lieu-  
“ tenancy, with the hopes of greater pro-  
“ motion from his services. In vain did he  
“ signalize himself upon every occasion : he  
“ wanted interest, and was overlook’d in  
“ every preferment. His regiment was re-  
“ duced : he had nothing but his half-pay  
“ to maintain his family, consisting of my  
“ mother and three daughters. In order  
“ to do this, he retired into a cheap coun-  
“ try, at a great distance from hence, and  
“ endeavoured by extraordinary frugality  
“ to make both ends meet ; this was barely  
“ sufficient, and we spared no pains to  
“ stretch it out to render it so. As my fa-  
“ ther still kept up his character, as well  
“ as his circumstances would admit, he at-  
tracted

“tracted the notice of a member of parlia-  
 “ment, who lived in the neighbourhood,  
 “and who had heard my father spoke of.  
 “He call’d at our little cottage one morn-  
 “ing, and invited my father to dinner. He  
 “complied with his desire, and went ac-  
 “cordingly, and returned home to us full  
 “of joy, poor man ! for the gentleman had  
 “promised him to use his interest to pro-  
 “cure him full pay. This gave us all the  
 “greatest satisfaction, and we began to  
 “reckon the days till he was to go up to  
 “London, with the greatest impatience.  
 “At length he went, and soon after wrote  
 “down to my father, to inform him that  
 “he was in great hopes of getting the af-  
 “fair done, but imagined he might be more  
 “successful if he was upon the spot him-  
 “self. This was a sufficient hint to induce  
 “my father to go up, and reduced we  
 “were to very great straits to get  
 “things proper for him. His letters to us  
 “for two months complained of his anxi-  
 “ety,

“ ety, and the little prospect there was of  
“ having his hopes realized ; that his living  
“ in town was so very expensive that he  
“ intended coming down again, if he did  
“ not succeed very shortly. This was soon  
“ followed by another letter, informing us  
“ that he was taken very ill, and would be  
“ glad to see us about him if possible. My  
“ dear mother could not think with any  
“ patience on his being ill in a strange  
“ place, without money or friends ; so sold  
“ off all her goods and things in the coun-  
“ try, for this was the only way she had to  
“ raise the money to bring her up to town ;  
“ and as we were in a hurry, the person  
“ who bought the things took advantage  
“ of it, and never gave us half what they  
“ were worth. Our journey expended the  
“ greater part of this sum : and my  
“ poor father was so weak and so low that  
“ he required the greatest care, and that at-  
“ tendance which we were not able to pro-  
“ cure. Our money was soon spent, and  
“ my

“ my mother even pawn’d her cloaths.  
“ These did not last long. My father with  
“ grief and anguish to see us thus reduced,  
“ grew worse and worse ; his was a lingering  
“ disorder, and he complain’d bitterly of  
“ the mortification and distress he suffered  
“ in seeing us thus exposed to such misfor-  
“ tunes. We were strangers. Nobody knew  
“ or would trust us with work, or my  
“ sisters and I might have been able to  
“ procure some assistance for my father.  
“ Though the lodgings we found him in  
“ were very poor ones, yet as we had  
“ not the money to pay our rent regu-  
“ larly as we used to do, the woman of  
“ the house threatened to turn us out. We  
“ had no food to eat, and knew not where to  
“ go, or what to do. I, being some  
“ years older than my sisters, felt more se-  
“ verely on my parents account than the  
“ other children did, who had not a sense of  
“ the miseries they endured. I knew not in  
“ what manner to help them, and could  
“ not

“ not fit by to see them perish. Often did  
“ I implore the Almighty Being to inspire  
“ me with some thought how to procure  
“ bread for them. The beginning of last  
“ week, I walked out in the morning very  
“ early, ignorant of the town or any body  
“ in it, nor did I much care where I strayed,  
“ for I had not eaten a morsel for two days  
“ before ; nor did what I suffered myself  
“ grieve me so much, as what my parents  
“ suffered, for I felt doubly for them. It  
“ was very early and a cold frosty morning,  
“ when I strolled out, dubious whether ever  
“ I should return or no. Our lodging was  
“ in one of those streets that lead towards  
“ the fields, and thither I directed my steps  
“ to be unobserved in the indulgence of  
“ my sorrows, which I was obliged to suppress  
“ before my father, lest I should make  
“ him worse. There were few people  
“ abroad, and those I did meet took no  
“ notice of me. I gave a vent to my griefs ;  
“ and they were the more violent, as I had  
“ been

“ been so long a time prohibited from shewing or expressing them. Every melancholy and dismal thought occurred to me, and I was quite overwhelmed with the reflection; tears streamed from my eyes, and I exclaimed amidst my sobs, ‘ My God, what will become of them, and where will my sorrows end !’

“ A young gentleman, whose name I have since learned to be Benson, followed me unperceived, and hearing what I said, came up and spoke to me.”—‘ Young woman,’ said he, ‘ your appearance speaks distress—I have followed you for some time, have observed your actions, and overheard your exclamations. There is no state so bad but it is in the power of God to remedy it. I wish to know the cause of your grief, and perhaps I may be able to serve you.’

“ His voice was to me the voice of an angel ! I looked at him and saw, through the cloud of tears that dimmed my eyes,

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E

“ good-



“good-nature and compassion, strongly  
“painted in his face. I opened my mouth  
“to answer him, but could not speak;  
“my heart was too full, and I burst out a  
“crying. He saw and pitied my sorrows :  
“he spoke the most soothing and comfort-  
“able things to me : his language was so  
“benevolent and so kind, that I could not  
“help trusting him, and told him every  
“thing as it was, though it was only by  
“questioning me, he prevailed on me to  
“satisfy him. He then told me that he  
“should wish to see my father, not that he  
“doubted the truth of what I had said, but  
“should chuse to hear this account from his  
“own mouth, and desired me to lead him  
“to the place where we lodged. This was  
“impossible for me to do, for I had lost  
“myself; but I told him the name of the  
“street, and he being as great a stranger  
“as I was, could not tell the way to it ei-  
“ther. However, we turned towards the  
“town, and the first person we met di-  
“rected

“rected us to it. When I got to the door  
“and was going in, he stopped.”

“As your father is in so weak and bad  
“a state,” said he, “it may affect him too  
“much to see a stranger, but prepare him  
“to see me against the evening, when I  
“will call upon him; in the mean time  
“there are two guineas, and get what he  
“wants, and do you be comforted my  
“good girl, and attend your parents.”

“I should have fallen on my knees at  
“his feet to thank him, if he seeing my sur-  
“prize, and guessing at my intention, had  
“not caught me by the hand, and pre-  
“vented me.”

“Don’t expose yourself in the street,”  
added he: “for I was unable to speak, but  
“the tears of gratitude and joy, that fell  
“plenteously from my eyes, sufficiently tes-  
“tified my feelings.”

“Don’t expose yourself; this is not all I  
“will do for you. Providence lets us suf-  
“fer these evils to try our fortitude and  
“patience, but the virtuous and good are

“ never overcome by them ; a sure reward  
“ attends them. I shall be with you at six  
“ o’clock.”

“ He left me, and for some time I almost  
“ doubted of the reality of the transaction.  
“ How to break this to the poor afflicted  
“ family I knew not, but determined for  
“ once to violate truth, and told them when  
“ I went up stairs, that I had found a guinea.”

“ The Lord hath sent it to us to pre-  
“ serve my poor babes from starving,” said  
my mother, who had hitherto borne all her  
woes without repining. “ Are you sure  
“ you found it,” said my father, with a  
voice that expressed his suspicion. “ I as-  
“ sured him I did ; and went to get some  
“ tea, and to prepare breakfast, which we  
“ had not had for almost two days before.”

Here she stop’d, and the tears burst into  
her eyes. My aunt took the opportunity of  
her silence, while she was wiping them  
away, to observe to me, that she had not  
been deceived in her opinion of him ; that  
she

she always thought him a very worthy young man, and better than all the others she knew. By this time, the young woman recovered herself, and desired to continue her story.

“I shall never forget,” resumed she, “the joy that appeared amongst us during our repast. We looked upon this as a present sent from Heaven, to which we returned our sincerest thanks. My poor father seemed to be reanimated by the satisfaction so unexpected a relief had diffused through us all. After we had finished, he again asked me concerning the money, and finding him more composed, I told him the whole story of meeting the gentleman, for I did not then know his name.”

“Ah Betsy,” said he, “young gentlemen don’t give these presents for nothing. You were handsome once, before famine had worn you to the bones. Sure Betsy

“you could not.—But I injure you, to  
“doubt your goodness and your virtue.”

“You do indeed Sir,” replied I, “and  
“also that of the young gentleman too ;  
“he will come here himself this evening,  
“and then you may see him.”

“Will he ?” said he, “then I shall know  
“his intentions.”

“He came at the hour he had appointed.  
“I cannot tell you all the conversation that  
“passed, but he comforted my father, and  
“said so many good things to him, that he  
“declared they were of more service to him  
“than the money he had given him ; for he  
“left ten guineas with my mother, and pro-  
“mised to come and see us again. My fa-  
“ther now began to recover daily. And  
“Mr. Benson often called upon us, and  
“we were removed into more comfortable  
“lodgings. He told my father that he had  
“no interest himself, but had some friends  
“whom he would apply to on his behalf.  
“My mother was desired to go out some-  
“times

“ times to take a little air after her long  
 “ confinement ; and one day she met Mrs.  
 “ Smith, with whom Mr. Benson lodges,  
 “ and who is a distant relation of hers.  
 “ They renewed their acquaintance ; and  
 “ going with my mother a few days ago,  
 “ to return her visit, as we rap’d at the  
 “ door, Mr. Benson was coming out. Mrs.  
 “ Smith, who observed us speaking to him,  
 “ was curious to know how we came ac-  
 “ quainted with him ; and my mother dis-  
 “ covered the whole story to her, and by  
 “ that means it came to your house-keeper,  
 “ Madam, who told you of it.—But I am  
 “ sure Mr. Benson would be much displeased  
 “ if he knew I was to tell any body ; he is  
 “ a great friend to my father, who would  
 “ never forgive me if he thought it was by  
 “ my means Mr. Benson was affronted.”

This is the story, Bell ; I am tired with  
 writing of it. Expect a continuation of  
 this matter in my next.

EMILY MITCOMBE.



## LETTER XI.

To the same.

“**N**EVER fear my dear,” said my aunt, “I would not injure you or your family so much as to mention a syllable of this affair to Mr. Benson if it would hurt you. I always took him to be a very good young man. Pray, my dear, what is your father’s name?”

“Bailey, Madam.”

“Bailey, Bailey,—with an e?”

“Yes, Madam.”

“What countryman is your father?”

“A Worcestershire man, Madam.”

“Then, Emily, they are some relations of yours. Your mother was a Bailey, and of Worcestershire. They are a very good family, and she was a good woman as ever lived. The Baileys—let me see—”

Here, my dear Bell, the good Lady ran on without interruption for twenty minutes at least, and by that time she had settled the  
genealogy

genealogy of the whole race, much to her own satisfaction, and to the full proof that we were related. *This* man was colonel at the battle of Naseby, *another* was at the destruction of the Spanish armada, and her inexhaustible memory afforded her names enough to run up to William the Conqueror, and beyond him for ought I know. Poor Betsy Bailey sat in astonishment at her learning; and I was employing my imagination another way, thinking on the person who was the occasion of this interview. Therefore you cannot expect me to retail my aunt's long list of my mother's honoured ancestors.

"Well my dear," said my aunt to her, after she had expended both her breath and her memory, in talking of the Don Quixotes of the former ages; "I will call and see your father soon, if you leave me his address; there is pen and ink, write it upon that card."

“Indeed, Madam,” replied the poor girl,  
 “my father will think it a very great honour, for he speaks very often of his family, and says, that the remembrance of their virtues, has fortified him in the midst of his distresses, and supported his courage and patience.”

“Your father must be a good and an honest man, and I’ll call and see him to-morrow ; and tell him I’ll do every thing in my power for him, and my brother will take care of him.

The poor child departed with joy in her countenance, but not before my aunt had bestowed marks of her bounty on her, to which I added my mite. I must postpone finishing this epistle, for my father has sent for me to know if I will go to Ranelagh to night.—I go to him.



I am just returned from Ranelagh, Bell, and late as it is cannot forbear acquainting you with the transactions of the evening. That odious Lady Bab!—

We

We went as appointed. My father and aunt, and Benson. Sir Edward Wilmington followed us, and so did Filmer. Lady Bab soon spied us out. She fastened on us, nothing could shake her off. Benson most particularly attracted her. She asked him questions : she shewed him all the people of fashion : entertained him with a thousand secret histories. He listened with complacence. I thought too, he eyed her with pleasure. However, I took care to give him an hint, that the colour on her cheeks was more the effect of art than nature. In vain I attempted to separate them. Sir Edward stuck to me. And that wretch Filmer was close at my elbow.

“ Lady Bab,” said I, “ I imagine that  
“ Lady is looking for you.”

“ No, no, my dear, they are my friends,  
“ whom I can see every night, let me have  
“ the happiness of filling up your party.”

“ These are the delights of London,  
“ Sir,” said she, “ turning to the lovely  
youth, who never looked more charming

than at that instant. "Pleasures never cloy  
" here from repetition, for we have always  
" variety sufficient to give us a fresh goût  
" for enjoyment."

" They are pleasures, my lady, that we  
" who live in the country can have no idea  
" of. Every thing conspires to give de-  
" light, of a very refined nature. Soft mu-  
" sic, and the presence of the loveliest wo-  
" men in the world.—What can—"

A party crossed between us, and I could hear no more. She drank tea with us. I dreaded to make myself ridiculous, yet could not help observing to her, how uneasy her friends would be at her absence. She took the hint, and to my mortification went and made an apology to them, and returned instantly to us. She engrossed Benson totally. I had no other means of shewing my rage, but quarrelling with Sir Edward, and abusing Filmer. She saw and triumphed in my confusion. It was too much to support; nothing was left for me, but

but to fly from the scene of mortification. I complained of an head-ach occasioned by the heat of the place, and wished to go home. When he heard that, I saw or fancied I saw a concern in his countenance, that amply repaid the trouble I had been at in feigning myself ill. He enquired after my health in so pleasing, so pathetic a manner, I could have wished to have been ever thus lamented. I could not help informing him I was better, but wished to be at home. But why do I flatter myself with what may never, I fear will never happen? Insensible Benson!—Must I break through my haughty reserve, my obstinate pride, and give you those opportunities of telling me a tale that others have watched for years before they could obtain? But if he should still be cold. I am tired, I am sleepy. To bed, but not to rest.—'Tis past three. Yours ever,

EMILY MITCOMBE.

LETTER



## LETTER. XII.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

**U**PON my soul, squire Benson, it won't do. The little jade has flung me at last. I thought I had her snug, but she gave me such a turn that I was thrown out fairly.

“What have you been at now, Hilgrove?”

“At the old work, my boy. Nay, don't look grave.”

I can't for the blood of me be idle. As I am obliged to be in the country on some disagreeable business, I think I may endeavour to make the time pass as pleasantly off my hands as may be. The consequence was, I kicked up a little bit of an amour with an apothecary's daughter in the neighbourhood. She has sentiments enough to be romantic; wit enough to be thought no fool; and beauty enough to be stared

stared at in a country church. Vain, no doubt, and her *petite personne* was the object of her admiration. She thrummed a little on the guittar, had but a very indifferent voice, and yet sang to it; fond of London, and every thing that came from it, though she had never seen it. I was soon initiated in her good graces. One qualification she had that compensated for all the rest. She was scarce eighteen, and had a plump yet delicate person. I am not scandalizing her, because she baulked me. No, hang it, I am above that, but she was a pretty good piece. Upon this foundation, and really no bad one, in my opinion, I determind to go to bed to her.

“To marry her, I presume.”

No no — fie upon it, I had no such thoughts. I am not half impudent enough for that ceremony. I praised her singing, flattered her person, became her music-master, by which means I had many little  
oppor-

opportunities of toying with her. It went on well; her guittar was a bad one, I sent for a better for her. A handsome ring becomes a fine hand that is continually exposed to view in playing. That was not wanting. My friend Ovid's advice was also followed;

Non bene conveniunt nec in unâ sede morantur  
Majestas & Amor

The best English of which is, that a fine fellow with a laced coat in the country does not stand half the chance of getting a girl as in a plain one—therefore “laid my “costly robes aside,” and commenced a fair siege. She received a number of presents from me.—Pretty expensive faith, into the bargain: and really I began to think, when I was capable of bribing the governor, the fortification would soon surrender. She hung aloof, and there was always a *ne plus ultra* fixed for me. Her coyness was not displeasing, because it run  
strongly

strongly in my head that I should soon triumph over it. Depend upon it that they have always the fairest play in the world with me. No compulsion, Hal. However I thought that it was high time to break the ice. I got madam alone, and began to play with her a little, but she flew off in a tangent, and her discourse savour'd something of the romantic; but as that is not the language of common sense, there was some hopes left. I have a very good opinion of those Sparabellas and Lindamiras. Well, if it won't do now, it will another time, thought I, as I mounted my horse and rode homewards. I slept very contentedly, and was stretching myself about eight in the morning, and making very pious resolutions concerning this same damoiselle, when lo! Jack brought me the following epistle.

“ Read (for thou canst read) the lay.

“ Sir,

“ As this is the last moment in which I shall have a right to dispose of my time

“ as

“ as I please myself, I cannot employ it  
 “ more agreeably than in writing to you  
 “ to return you thanks for the friendship  
 “ with which you honoured me, and to  
 “ acknowledge your kindness; the many  
 “ testimonies that I have received of it at  
 “ your hands, I shall preserve with a parti-  
 “ cular veneration, and whenever I see  
 “ them shall think of you. A young man,  
 “ who has long paid his addresses to me in  
 “ a manner very different from yours, now  
 “ waits below to conduct me to church. I  
 “ shall therefore bestow my hand on him  
 “ now, as I have my heart long since. But in  
 “ whatever station I shall be, to boast of  
 “ the friendship of Mr. Hilgrove, will be  
 “ an honour to, Sir, &c.”

There's an epistle for you! not to be  
 matched in the Secretary's Guide, or any  
 other industrious compilation, for the be-  
 nefit of young letter-writers. What do  
 you think of it? Never did man look

so like a puppy as I did on the receipt of it. I could not believe the reality of it for some time. However, conviction soon followed, and I have enter'd into a resolution to be revenged if I can. To be sure it has not the most promising aspect to attack a woman who is fond of her husband. But something may fall out that may reinspire my hopes. I intend to go and see her to-morrow, laugh at myself in public, whine in private, and tell her she might have commanded me and my fortune. That will make her hate her husband; she can't avoid being charitable to me out of pure gratitude. This must be done that I may not be laughed at, for at present, to tell you the truth, I feel myself very ridiculous. But this disappointment should be a lesson to you, and make you double your diligence with Miss Mitcombe. What are you about, man? Can there be greater encouragement given to you than treating her lovers ill before  
your



your face. Is it not in plain English saying, "I would not serve you so if you were in the same situation." As for your being fond of her I have not the least doubt of it, but you cannot pluck up a spirit to tell her so. I'll shew you a pattern of what a man should do in a short time. Before three months are at an end if I don't give a better account of my dame,

Why then let me pass  
For a fool and an ass.

A chace of a fox only, from the length and continuance of it, is infinitely more amusing than running down a poor quiet hare, though the former animal is not worth three farthings. I'll shew you generalship. Adieu, and believe me yours

JAMES HILGROVE.

LETTER

## L E T T E R. XIII.

To Mrs. ADDERLEY.

**I** Am more distress'd than ever, my dear Bell; something must be done, or I shall lose Benson. Lady Bab will have him. But to give you a regular account of matters. My aunt went to see Captain Bailey, as she calls him, according to her promise. At her return she was all in raptures.

“Well, my dear Emily,” said she, seating herself by me, “I have been to see Captain Bailey, and really think him a sensible, genteel man. I assure you he is of a very good family, and of the same Baileys that I mentioned. But he speaks of Mr. Benson as of an angel.”

“It is not so much,” said he to me, “for the sums he has advanced me, which are considerable, or relieving me thereby from very imminent distresses; as for the  
“manner

“manner in which he has done it, that I  
 “am obliged to him; he has given me  
 “such friendly advice, such good counsel,  
 “and has behaved so kindly to me, that  
 “he has doubled all his favours by his  
 “mode of conferring them. He has the  
 “best heart, and the handsomest person of  
 “any man I ever knew.”

“We had a long conversation about him,  
 “and his virtues are very extraordinary for a  
 “young man of this age; but I had always  
 “a good opinion of him for his regard to  
 “the wisdom of the ancients. I have pro-  
 “mised the Captain to speak to my brother  
 “about him, and am sure if he can do any  
 “thing for him he will. Sir Thomas Mit-  
 “combe should have interest enough to pro-  
 “cure him a commission. No stone shall be  
 “left unturn’d to do it, though I should be  
 “obliged to solicit for it myself.”

My aunt’s good-nature and zeal for this  
 unfortunate gentleman, will not rest till she  
 has procured him some establishment. My  
 father

father was out when she return'd, so that she was obliged to wait for his coming home to dinner before she could urge her suit, which she did so effectually, that he promised to exert himself in his behalf. This gave my aunt great joy, and pleased me so much to think that we should be able to complete Mr. Benson's liberality and good designs, that I bore with patience a message from Lady Bab, enquiring after my health, and if able to see company, and disengaged, she would come and spend the evening with me. I was determined to see her, and she came. Professions of inviolable friendship, that I knew how to esteem very well, were not spared. I saw the hour in which it was usual for Mr. Benson to call pass by, with a great deal of pleasure. She said very little of him, and I took care not to lead on the conversation: however, my aunt could scarcely restrain herself when she heard his name mentioned. I never saw Lady Bab so grave, so sentimental, or so

so pleasing. This must be confess'd, painful as it is to me, but I was truly rejoiced at Benson's absence. She had laid herself out to chance that night. She spoke of a little party that she was to have in a few nights, and hoped for our company, which we promised her, and she departed. Cards were received, and last night was fixed for the party. Benson came and informed us of the invitation he had from Lady Bab Arnold. He asked if we went; and finding that we were to be of the company, entreated permission to go along with us. This was readily granted, for my aunt's fondness for him seems to encrease ever since this discovery. At the hour appointed Benson came to escorte us. How was he alter'd! His dress was elegant; a light blue neatly embroider'd with silver, nothing flaring or foppish about him, yet so easy was he, that no one ever seemed better qualified to be a beau than him, though he avoided any thing that might  
give

give him that character. His fine shape was shewn by the tambour waistcoat he wore. His whole appearance was irresistible. But I could not help feeling a secret pang when I reflected that it was to compliment Lady Bab he had thus altered his mode of dressing.

"I see, Mr. Benson, you can, if you please, wear fashionable cloaths, and deviate from your customs."

"Your desire, Miss Mitcombe, first induced me to do it."

"You are grown a flatterer too as well as a beau."

"Don't misapprehend me, for I mean nothing less. You pointed out to me the absurdity of being particular, and I will endeavour to avoid it."

By this time we were informed the coach waited at the door, and we all set off. There was the greater part of the company assembled before our arrival. Their eyes were instantly turned upon us, The



bashful timidity of Benson heightened the beauty of his appearance, and rendered him more attractive. We were soon huddled among the crowd, and in a short time we went to cards. Mr. Benson never plays. Lady Bab did not chuse to sit down to any table, but under pretence of taking care of the company, kept herself disengaged for the sole purpose of attaching herself to Benson. I saw through the design, and you may suppose could not command my attention to what I was about. When they laughed or spoke a little louder than ordinary, my eyes turned involuntarily to that part of the room where they were. The odious Sir Edward was placed at the same table with me too, and, no doubt, observed my uneasiness, and inward disturbance. He gave me an hint of it, by telling me I was not so keen as usual, and that he expected to make up by that night's play his former losings

to

to me. I told him he was very welcome if he could.

"I thought," replied he, "the pleasure  
"of winning at cards was one of the  
"greatest a lady could experience; what  
"can be put in competition with it, to  
"make it thus neglected and despised?"

I shewed him by my looks, that this satirical speech was not considered in the light of a compliment. The pool was finished. I resigned my seat to a lady who had expressed a desire of playing, and retired under pretence of an headach. Lady Bab was by this time in close conference with Mr. Benson; and I cannot help telling you, that it was a singular pleasure to me to disturb them. My presence chagrined her, though he did not appear at all affected by it either one way or another. His conversation was as easy and polite as usual. Nothing could make me reconcile this proceeding to myself, but the knowledge I have of

Lady Bab's fondness for seducing the lovers of her acquaintance, and shackling them with her own chains. This I cannot bear. Though Mr. Benson has not appeared in that light to me, or ever addressed me in that stile, yet I am apt to imagine he has some such intention. He shall not want encouragement from me, nor did I fail to give him some hints as we were going home, that if he has any sense, he must surely take. Ah Bell, how am I fallen, how altered, who am obliged to make advances in my turn. It is a mortifying reflection. But every thing is tolerable and commendable that will serve to prevent Lady Bab from enticing him away. Why don't you write to me?

Your's

EM. MITCOMBE.

LETTER

## LETTER. XIV.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esquire.

**I** Congratulate you, my dear Hilgrove, on what you stile a disappointment, with great sincerity and real joy. Happy to think that the man I call my friend has escaped the commission of an action that must render two people miserable. I commend the prudence and virtue of the girl, and to return your quotation from Ovid, think with him :

—— Neque lex æquior ulla  
Quam necis artificis arte pira sua.

The gifts you wanted to bribe her with, were the properest fellows to make her husbands. I really should join them in the laugh against you were I in the neighbourhood. However, be comforted, the loss you have sustained will make you less sanguine another time, and the ri-

dicule you have sustained upon this occasion will teach you not to throw yourself in the way of any future disappointment of the like kind. May it teach you wisdom, and learn you the golden rule of doing as you would be done by. Had you a daughter, and were in the station of that humble apothecary, how should you like to have her present fame, and future welfare both destroyed by a libidinous young fellow, who has four thousand a year, and to whom it should seem Providence had only been bountiful in giving him fortune, sense, and a good person, that he might do more mischief amongst mankind? Let these remonstrances, and the shame you feel from a conviction of having done wrong, that false shame which even now torments you, have an effect upon your conduct; and abstain henceforward from seducing innocence.

Mr.

Mr. Apgill has a great knowledge of the world, of men and manners, more than of books, which he consults but little.

“Half of them,” he says, “are written  
“by men who have only the theory to  
“argue from, which must be very fine,  
“I allow, if the practice did not con-  
“tradict them every hour of the day.”

He is extremely severe, but those who are used to him do not regard his satire much. He proceeds upon very just and virtuous principles, and his whole desire and study is to praise desert, by constantly opposing it to the folly, foppery, or vice of the age. But however good his intentions may be, this is too delicate an æra to be lash'd into the practice or love of virtue. The satirists who wrote at the first corruption of the Roman manners, used a laudable severity. So great a change astonished them, and contrasting the crimes then hourly practised, with their former innocence and purity, sufficiently



justified them in the acrimony of their expressions. Whether Mr. Apgil's hatred of folly and vice proceeds from love of virtue or no, is yet a secret to me; or whether it proceeds from the natural malevolence of his heart, though I hope, and am inclined to think the former. A man who is eternally exposing our deformities, cannot be an agreeable or pleasing companion. The person who flatters us is, nevertheless, much more destructive, and should be more carefully avoided. I confess that I am not happy in his presence, not fearing for myself; on the contrary, glad to meet due correction, I should kiss the rod. But it is disagreeable to me to hear him humble others so much as he does. Not that he affects himself any superiority, but the generality of young people shun him; yet there is such a mixture of sense and oddity in his discourse, that I would forgive him were he to assail me, for the satisfaction of hearing

hearing him make his remarks. I cannot help secretly wishing that he was acquainted with your adventure, and that you were to come in his way. I should indulge an ill-natured pleasure in the reflections he would make upon the occasion. Our fine ladies and gentlemen are as much afraid of him as of an heavy shower of rain, they get out of his way as fast as they can, for which reason he seldom misses any opportunity that offers; but when he and I are left alone, I don't know how it is, but we converse very sociably. Without looking on Miss Mitcombe as the daughter of a baronet, and regarding her being entitled to a very good fortune as I suppose, I should like her. Her politeness and attention to me grow more pleasing every day, and I believe a cessation of them would render me uneasy. I have not the least cause to fear it, and might I indulge my vanity, should suppose that my confessing the effect her

charms have upon me would not be displeasing; yet that I have not done, nor can I prevail upon myself to do it, till I shall be better acquainted with her disposition and temper. You will tell me that my affection for her is not very great, when I go to make such a scrutiny. But if I am to be happy with a wife, I must satisfy myself in every particular. A woman, when she is married, will hardly at once forsake those paths, which were so pleasing to her in a state of celibacy. The coquette, as a maiden, is not half so detestable a character as a wife that entertains lovers and gives them hopes; yet such things are to be seen here that I could not bear, though I hope my patience is equal to most accidents that befall me. Miss Mitcombe is a genteel, a sensible, a lovely girl. Thus she appears to me, and my heart at this moment bears testimony to the truth of this character; but what her private sentiments may

may be I know not, yet on them the foundation of my good opinion of her rests.

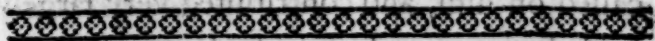
Since my last to you, I have got the acquaintance of a woman of quality and fashion, the sister of the Earl of B——, through the means of the Mitcombe family. As a kind of appendage to it, in which light I am principally respected, I suppose, I was asked to a *route* her ladyship had a few nights ago. There I saw many well-dressed people of both sexes; but their manners and characters I had but little liberty and opportunity of examining, for play was the business of the whole assembly, except Lady Bab and myself. She did not chuse to engage herself, that she might pay more attention to her guests :: and I never play. We chatted together for a long time, and her ladyship gave me the history of most of her company, with a great deal of wit and lively severity. Miss Mitcombe at

last joined us, having quitted her party, and then the conversation became general, and Lady Bab lost her vivacity. I have since been considering with myself, whether it might not be of singular service to strangers, such as I am, to have a person well versed in the histories of the companies they go into, to assist them, much in the same manner as the candidates among the Romans for places had each a nomenclator to prompt him in calling the citizens, his electors, by their particular names. A man then would be enabled to chuse his companions by their merit, and not run the risque of being deceived or imposed upon by pretences. It might be difficult to find out such a person free from prejudice, and it would aggravate the misfortune if one was to be deceived by the person he reposes a confidence in; that I shall never experience from you, bad as you are. I pray  
4 for

LORD STANTON. 109

for your reformation, and remain your's,  
truly,

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER XV.

To Mrs. ADDERLEY.

**W**E have not been without our share  
in the re-establishment of Captain  
Bailey. Mr. Benson has had the pleasure  
of seeing his desire of restoring him grati-  
fied, without putting him to that expence,  
which I am afraid his fortune will not bear,  
for I imagine it is but a small one. My  
aunt had prevailed with my father, who  
is very fond of her, to make use of his in-  
terest to procure Mr. Bailey a commission.  
He gave her hopes that he should be able  
to succeed, but this she concealed from the  
Captain; as not being willing to flatter  
him with the hopes of preferment, which at  
last he might be disappointed in. She visited  
him



him nevertheless, but always charged him to conceal his knowledge of her and our family from Mr. Benson, who constantly called on him, and contributed very largely to their support, but in such a manner as made the obligation double. He had been contriving means of settling Mr. Bailey in the country, I suppose upon his own estate, and had told him he was afraid that his interest was not sufficient to procure him a re-establishment in the army, but that it might be in his power some day or another; in the mean time, that his family could be maintained much cheaper in the country. The Captain had therefore prepared himself to quit the town whenever his friend should appoint, and was resolved to be directed by him; for he was as much beloved by the whole family, as if he had been their nearest relation. Just as all his hopes were extinguished, my father informed my aunt that he had procured a company for her friend. Nothing could be more agreeable to the  
good

good lady. She proposed to ask him to dinner the next day, and to have Mr. Benson present, informing my father at the same time of the part he had acted. He consented, and my aunt went to invite the Captain, giving him notice that she had interested her brother in his favour, and that he had the greatest reason to expect the most favourable turn in his affairs. The poor gentleman was extremely overjoyed, and promised to be there. He accordingly came; and as we were talking to him, Mr. Asgill entered. You know him very well, our door is never shut to him, though we were denied to every body else. Our conversation turned upon Mr. Benson.

“Aye, that young fellow,” said Asgill, “has less of the fool about him than any of the puppies I see here. But I suppose he is more artful than they are, and conceals more vices under that simple appearance, while the others glory in a public display of their iniquities.”

“I be-

"I believe you wrong him Sir," said the Captain, interrupting him with some warmth. "I can affirm, from experience, that nothing can exceed the goodness of his heart, but the excellence of his understanding."

"You are so uncharitable upon every occasion Mr. Aseill," said my aunt, "that no one can gain your good word."

"What," replied he, "have I not been praising him? Sure it is a negative merit to be less of a fool than his neighbours. And it is a greater sign of his sense to conceal his defects. I am sure Emily thinks him a fool; for I suppose he has not been flattering her."

I am sure this speech called all my blood up in my face, and I should have replied tartly, had not the entrance of my father with Mr. Benson prevented me. My aunt introduced Captain Bailey to my father. In the mean time, I enjoyed the surprize  
that

that was so visible in Mr. Benson's countenance, on seeing Mr. Bailey.

"You have seen this gentleman before now Mr. Benson," said my aunt.

"I have had that pleasure," returned he, "with some confusion."

The conversation became general, but did not last long, as dinner was ready. Though Mr. Benson did not know the good fortune that awaited the Captain, yet he seemed pleased to see him appear in a manner suitable to his former rank in life. The Captain who could not help forming some hopes, though he knew not of what nature, sat in an anxious and disagreeable state of expectation. At length the cloth was removed, and my father addressed Mr. Bailey.

"My sister, Sir, has done me the pleasure of introducing me to you, and by that means has given me an opportunity of being personally convinced, that your merits exceed her account of them. I must  
"also

“also look upon you as allied to our family, for my late wife was of your name, and from the same part of the country. Not more upon this, than the former account; I think myself bound to do every thing in my power to serve you. I have happily succeeded.”

Joy and tumultuous pleasure rushed into the Captain's face, he endeavoured to speak but could not. Mr. Benson knew no what to make of this matter, and sat also silent. My poor aunt partook of all their sensations. Sir Thomas proceeded.

“I had a favourable opportunity of laying your merits before his Majesty, and he has been pleased to order you preferment: there is now in consequence of it, a company at your service, and your commission is ready at the War Office. Now permit me, Captain, to wish you joy, and drink your health and success to you.”

The

The Captain stammered out some inarticulate acknowledgements. But had you seen Benson, you would have concluded from the expression of his countenance, that he was the person on whom the obligation was conferred. His face indicated his pleasure. He joined the company in congratulating the Captain, who begged leave to retire, and to have permission to wait on my father next day, when he should be more capable of expressing his gratitude, and the obligation he was under to him. My father and Apgill went out soon after, and left Mr. Benson with us, whom we pressed to stay tea. He consented, and my aunt could not miss the opportunity of praising his conduct, and letting him know she was perfectly acquainted with his whole behaviour to the Captain's family. His confusion was very great, and his whole reply was, that he considered it as his duty to assist merit in distress; and as far as his abilities rendered him



him capable to perform it, he did so ; and that there was nothing more in the transaction than what was incumbent on him. My aunt commended his modesty, and went out of the room. As this affair was the most recent, on which some conversation might be framed, and as we were alone, I thought that might be the subject of our discourse as well as any thing else.

“ Indeed, I am very happy that my father succeeded in his application for Captain Bailey. It would have given me great concern if he had not. But even if he had not, there was a design on foot to have taken care of him and his family, until something could be done for him.”

He looked at me attentively for a few moments.

“ If any thing can add to Miss Mitcombe’s perfections,” said he, “ it is the exercise of benevolence. But that will render you more amiable : and what heart shall be able to withstand the power of such united charms ?”

“ You

"You have gained the art of flattery  
"since you came to London, Mr. Benson."

"No," said he, taking me by the hand,  
"I say nothing but what is consistent with  
"the strictest truth, and which at this  
"moment my——"

My aunt entered and interrupted this interesting conversation. Ten minutes absence would have led to a most important discovery. However, though I have missed it now, I expect to hear it from him very soon. I am satisfied that my eyes have not lost their fire, and that the cold, the frozen heart of the insensible Benson is warmed by them. Congratulate me, Bell.

Ah, if you could have seen his face; if you could have read the thousand tender things his eyes told me in that moment; you would—but I am glad you did not, for I should have met a rival in my friend. Adieu my dear Bell. Expect that my next shall acquaint you of his dying at my feet.

Thine truly,

EM. MITCOMBE.

LETTER

## LETTER XVI.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esq.

**I** Fear that your predictions will be fulfilled at last, and that I shall become what you have prophesied, the slave of Miss Mitcombe. I find how dangerous it is to frequent the society of a lovely woman. How irresistible her smiles! How flattering the little partialities she shews you! But when a goodness of heart and tenderness of disposition, join the engaging, the bewitching form, there is no escaping. An acquaintance with Miss Mitcombe, has discovered those latent virtues, which when known and seen must stamp worth, eternal worth! inestimable value on her character!

The casket, when to outward shew

The workman's art is seen,

Is doubly valu'd, when we know

It holds a gem within.

That

That gem I have discovered in Miss Mitcombe.—An heart alive to every sensation of pity, humanity, and benevolence.—An accident too long to relate to you in this, has afforded me an opportunity of learning her sentiments. On the discovery, my heart, which accords with every string that utters such sounds, first knew the tenderest feelings. I beheld her with rapture, and my tongue had almost informed her of the passion my overflowing heart was then first susceptible of. The entrance of her aunt put a stop to it, but she heard enough to make her sensible that I had more to say, and if I can guess from the few words I uttered, a declaration of my sentiments would not have been unfavourably received. I am determined now to open my mind to her, as I shall every day receive further insight into her notions and manners.



I had written thus far, when I was surprised by a visit from Mr. Apgill. It was a rainy

a rainy morning, and I sat down to write to you, while my breakfast was preparing. After paying him the usual compliments, which he received and returned with more civility than common, I asked him if he had breakfasted.

"No," said he, "I came to breakfast with you."

"I esteem it a favour, and am obliged to you for your company."

"So you may; for there are not many whom I would be at the trouble of going to see. But I suppose I plague you: You would rather I had stayed away, or else you would not have paid me that unmeaning compliment."

"On my word you mistake. I spoke as I meant."

"There are forty fellows that would rather see an ague than me. They shut their doors against me. And only because I tell them truth. There's that gilded bug Filmer hates me worse than the smell  
"of

“ of tobacco smoke, only because I make  
“ free with his follies.”

“ I promise you Mr. Asgill, you shall  
“ never find my doors shut against you.  
“ You are ever welcome to me, and when  
“ I do any thing that shall merit your cor-  
“ rection, spare me not.”

“ Humph, that is as much as to say, you  
“ are faultless. That’s vanity. Gross va-  
“ nity, and should be checked in its growth.  
“ Depend upon it, I’ll not be sparing in  
“ my censures.”

“ Depend upon it, I’ll take them in good  
“ part.”

“ That’s all I want. You will find the  
“ dreaded severity abate by that means.  
“ And it is the want of that in others makes  
“ me so much shuned and feared. Yet the  
“ fine ladies and fine gentlemen should use  
“ me as they do their magnifying glasses,  
“ by which they find worms in their noses,  
“ and squeeze them out. When I exag-  
“ gerate a fault, they should be no more  
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“angry with me than with the glass, but  
 “correct it. We should neither of us re-  
 “flect objects that ceased to exist.”

“Your intention may be good Sir, but  
 “mankind must be treated with more le-  
 “nity, they will not bear to have their  
 “faults told them in that manner.”

“Yes, but they will continue in the ex-  
 “ercise of folly, and hear that others should  
 “speak of them behind their backs as free-  
 “ly as they please, and they in their turns  
 “treat their absent acquaintances with the  
 “same familiarity : and I who only tell them  
 “to their faces, with a desire of doing them  
 “good, what all the world says of them,  
 “am branded with a thousand names, and  
 “almost universally detested ; while my  
 “age only secures me from being run  
 “through the body, or having my throat  
 “cut by some hot-headed fool,

\* Who sleeps on nettles till he kills his man,

\* See Johnson's Satire, &c.

“ for declaring openly how troublesome he  
 “ is, while all the rest of his acquaintances  
 “ thinking just as I do, slander him in pri-  
 “ vate, and are esteemed by him.”

“ Then you should let him go on his  
 “ own way.”

“ And see him burst like an overloaded  
 “ gun, and wound and maim the harmless  
 “ people, that may unfortunately happen  
 “ to surround him. I have seen those fel-  
 “ lows fall upon modesty and innocence,  
 “ and worry them worse than the dogs do a  
 “ bull tied to a stake. My spleen has risen,  
 “ and I have taken them off their prey,  
 “ at my own expence. But this it is, that  
 “ has earned me the appellation of ill-na-  
 “ ture, and being a Cynic.”

“ There is a peculiar asperity in your re-  
 “ flections, that not only those that smart  
 “ from them, but those who may reasonably  
 “ expect to share the censure of them, all  
 “ join against you. I cannot help saying,

“that nothing appears so disgusting as  
“truths unseasonably told.”

“Whom do I offend—the good and the  
“worthy? no. I may say as I think in  
“many things with Pope,

Curs'd be the verse how well so e'er it flow,  
That serves to make one honest man my foe.

“And as I don't set up for a professed wit,  
“I can spare my friend, and lose my joke.”

“But it appears that you can have but  
“few friends.”

“You mistake, young man, I have  
“some, and they know me, and they  
“will confess that I have done them some  
“good, for all men are not incorrigible;  
“and let me assure you that nothing but  
“the conscious knowledge of some good  
“I have done, and the hope that I may  
“do more, prevents my retiring from a  
“world I hate, and the society of a set  
“of men whom I despise.”

“I should

"I should imagine that people would  
 "be so much on their guard, before a man  
 "who sets up for a professed censor, that  
 "you would never be able to come at the  
 "knowledge of their character."

"You know not the world. The love  
 "of scandal, and depreciating the cha-  
 "racters of others to exalt their own, is  
 "predominant. Both sides give me in-  
 "formation, with the hope of having  
 "their favourite inclinations gratified. But  
 "they are generally disappointed, and the  
 "satire returns upon themselves. But I  
 "also hear good sometimes, and your be-  
 "haviour to Captain Bailey's family (a  
 "matter not worth relating here) has not  
 "escaped me. I suppose some design up-  
 "on the daughter influenced your con-  
 "duct. She is really a pretty girl, and  
 "spoke of you in the highest terms of ap-  
 "plause."

"Did she?"

“Yes; and think you have no bad fancy. She is a pretty innocent, worth the debauching—”

“I am sorry that you have such an opinion of either her or me. However, I forgive it, and your knowledge of the iniquity of the world will bear excuse for your thinking so; but our innocence will convince you to the contrary.”

“Few young men prove themselves so disinterested. However, I am inclined to believe you: another circumstance which will prove my good opinion of you, I will admit you to my confidence, and inform you, that though you do not design any such thing, a friend of yours does.”

“Aye, who can be a friend of mine, and harbour such a villainous design?”

“One that shall not go untold of it; one who conceives the virgin charms of the daughter should recompense the service he has done the father.”

“You

"You cannot mean Sir Thomas Mitcombe!"

"I do, indeed; but he shall not escape me. We went to see the Captain yesterday, for Sir Thomas took me with him, as I had been present at the former transactions. His eyes were rivetted on the girl all the time he was there, and he never ceased talking of her when he came away. I believe he considers her as a tidbit. But I will set his teeth an edge before he mumbles her."

"Perhaps, Mr. Asgill, you may not have sufficient reasons to think that Sir Thomas would be guilty of such injustice, if they are only founded upon his talking of her in that manner."

"I know him very well, he cannot disguise his thoughts from me, and to mend the matter he expects me to be his convenient friend. However, you may go and tell him if you please, for I shall."



“ Then there is no occasion for my taking your office out of your hands.”

“ No, nor you would not chuse to offend the father of Emily Mitcombe.”

“ How Sir !”

“ You need not be angry, or redden,”  
 (I suppose my confusion was too visible to escape his penetrating eye.) “ A fine girl,  
 “ with a fine fortune is by no means a  
 “ despicable thing ; and it is to be imagined that your vanity has not been asleep all this time, and neglected to see  
 “ what all the rest of the world perceived  
 “ plainly enough, that she either had, or  
 “ wanted to have a new lover in you ; and  
 “ as you are a smock-faced hale youth,  
 “ saw that you were not displeasing to her,  
 “ and so—”

“ Stop, Sir, stop. Never did I declare myself a particular admirer of Miss  
 “ Mitcombe. The friendship the family  
 “ profess for me, is the cause of my being  
 “ so frequently at Sir Thomas’s house, but

“ I shall

"I shall absent myself if the world talks thus."

"Why? If she likes you, and her father does not think ill of it, why should you not mend your fortune by tacking her's to it."

"It is a subject I have never thought upon."

"Well, well, I shall come and break-fast with you soon again."

This conversation has finished the paper, and the writing of it has tired me. Therefore farewell.

GEORGE BENSON.



## LETTER XVII.

To the same.

**I**T is the friendship of such a man as Agill I want. One who has a thorough knowledge of the world, and will help

me to make those remarks which, unassisted, might escape me. He has made the first advances towards an intimacy which I shall industriously cultivate. This conversation with him served to open my eyes, and confirm opinions and hopes I had scarcely began to entertain before. He tells me the world sees it; he has heard it said so without doubt. This circumstance more than any other would make me wish to know whether a tender of my heart would be acceptable to her. I confess that I feel myself happier in her presence than when away from her; that I am uneasy till I see her; but though I have been in her company three times since I wrote to you before, no opportunity has offered in which I might open my heart to her. She steals more upon me every hour; she looked like an angel last night. There was a large company at Sir Thomas's, but Emily eclipsed them all. Why had I no eyes for her charms till this moment, when she  
seems

seems to challenge my regard? While I blame and accuse my own blindness, her beauties burst upon me with a double force. I wait but for a favourable moment to declare to her, that I cannot avoid paying that tribute to her merit which it deserves. I dined yesterday at her father's, with some friends, among whom was Apgill severe as usual. One of the company happened to mention a recent circumstance of a gentleman's breaking through the laws of hospitality and friendship, in seducing the wife of his host and acquaintance; whose politeness, and an invitation to his house afforded him the opportunity of perpetrating his infamous design: the action was universally condemned. One observed, in the language of Shakespeare, it was

——as bad.

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

“Or rather,” replied Afgill, “as doing a piece of service to the father, in order to debauch his daughter.”

Nobody present knew to what this speech alluded, but the parties concerned. I looked at Sir Thomas, and found confusion visible in his face; but as the conversation suffered no interruption by Afgill’s remark, he recovered himself. Among the other topics a new play was brought on the carpet.

“The piece, in my opinion, has little, very little merit; yet it meets with public approbation,” said one of the company.

“It is in that piece, I think,” said Afgill, “that a gentleman who delights in beneficent actions, and the exercise of humanity, styles himself *the lewd fool of pity*. With what propriety, I know not, unless the author thought that every man who thus employed his time and fortune was a fool. But why should he charge

“charge himself with lewdness? Nothing  
 “of that nature appears in his character.  
 “But the author from an unhappy con-  
 “nection of ideas, and knowing that fools  
 “are naturally lewd, adds this epithet;  
 “the consequence of which is, that every  
 “generous and charitable man from hence-  
 “forth in the language of the playwright  
 “is to be stigmatized with the appellation  
 “of being a lewd fool.”

“I do not know for what it is abused,”  
 replied a young gentleman, “the whole  
 “town approves it; the ladies admire it;  
 “and the author has made an immense sum  
 “of money by that and some others.”

“The very worst proof you could bring  
 “me of his merit,” rejoined Afgill. “The  
 “approbation of the town will secure him  
 “money. But what is that town composed  
 “of who judge it? People in general  
 “that know nothing of the matter, who  
 “hardly know whether they are pleased  
 “or no, or whether they ought to be so;  
 “and



“and as for the judgment of the ladies,  
 “there is but little to be said on that head.  
 “An Irishman in one, is the drollest *crea-*  
 “*tur*; and a Scotchman in the other, is  
 “the most honest *fellur*, and this is the  
 “ground of a woman’s approbation. And  
 “could so pretty a gentleman as you con-  
 “tradict a fine lady, or prevent her lisping  
 “nonsense by the hour? On the contra-  
 “ry your politeness would establish her  
 “opinion as the criterion of merit and  
 “taste, and praise the author as he praised  
 “himself in one of his prologues. His  
 “works are called Modern Comedies, that  
 “is, the spectator who has any feeling,  
 “has more opportunity of crying than  
 “laughing. One comic incident is the  
 “distress of a worthy officer and his fa-  
 “mily, whose daughter is subject to insult  
 “from the father’s situation. This may  
 “be ridiculous, as poverty ought always to  
 “be in a great and wealthy nation, and  
 “for the honour of this country they hold  
 “it

“ it in sovereign contempt. However, it  
 “ puts me in mind of the reply of Touch-  
 “ stone, the clown, in Shakespeare’s *As you*  
 “ *like it*, when a courtier comes to invite  
 “ the duke’s daughter and Rosalind to a  
 “ wrestling match, which he calls sport,  
 “ and for the greater inducement relates  
 “ the circumstance of a poor old man  
 “ weeping over three of his sons who had  
 “ been thrown by the duke’s wrestler, and  
 “ had their ribs broken, ‘ Well,’ says  
 Touchstone, ‘ thus does the age grow  
 ‘ wiser and wiser every day. It is the first  
 ‘ time that I ever heard, breaking bones  
 ‘ was sport for the ladies.’

“ The judicious Mr. Fielding very just-  
 “ ly asks in his preface to Joseph Andrews,  
 ‘ What could exceed the absurdity of an  
 ‘ author who should write the comedy of  
 ‘ Nero, with the merry incident of rip-  
 ‘ ping up his mother’s belly? Or what  
 ‘ would give a greater shock to humanity  
 ‘ than

“than an attempt to expose the miseries of  
“poverty and distress to ridicule?”

“The author we are talking of seems  
“to have had address enough to hit this  
“mark. No great compliment to the feel-  
“ings of his heart, or the goodness of  
“his head.”

“Aye, but,” says one, “these are sen-  
“timental comedies.”

“That I deny, or that they are come-  
“dies at all. As for his sentiments, Pope  
“has described them in one line, an

Unmeaning thing they call a thought.”

“And a very sensible ancient has defined  
“comedy to be, *Imitatio vitæ speculum*  
“*consuetudinis, imago veritatis.* (An imi-  
“tation of life, a representation of the  
“customs and manners of the times, and  
“so far an image of truth as to be  
“probable.) These comedies do not an-  
“swer this description in the least. And  
“yet these are pieces applauded by the  
“public:

“ public : so true it is, that what is ap-  
 “ proved by men of sense is tasteless to the  
 “ million. Or Montesquieu observes,  
 ‘ What is low is the sublime of the vulgar,  
 ‘ who are pleased to see a thing made for  
 ‘ them and adapted to their capacity.’

“ Let him who has a mind to thrust a  
 “ bad play down the throats of the town,  
 “ only get half a dozen people of fashion  
 “ to patronize it, and his fortune is made.  
 “ But let merit ever so conspicuous appear  
 “ unprotected, and neglect shall be the con-  
 “ sequence.”

The greater part of the company assent-  
 ed to the truth of his observations. How  
 much was I mistaken in the opinion of  
 Afgill's knowledge being founded in ex-  
 perience only. He has added to it the  
 most extensive reading—and seems to re-  
 tain whatever is worthy of notice. As it  
 was intended that I should stay the even-  
 ing; the guests departed without me,  
 and I was indulged with an hour's conver-  
 sation with Emily and her aunt. I have  
 already

already told you that she appeared most lovely. But what I lamented most was, the want of an opportunity to speak to her alone. She seemed in that sweet disposition which would not have been ruffled by my urging my suit, or would have denied it. But the presence of the old Lady effectually prevented my being particular. Sir Edward Wilmington, who was of the party yesterday, renewed, his civilities to me, and lamented in very polite terms, that we were not better friends: he charged the present want of intimacy to my account, and declared, that he would not suffer me to remain so little known to him. I shall benefit by his acquaintance, he is a gentleman whom every one speaks well of, and I have no doubt he merits such universal approbation. But he is an admirer of Miss Mitcombe's, and cannot look upon me in that light, or he would never solicit my friendship. Be that as it may, I can always deal candidly and

and fairly by him should he acquaint me with his sentiments, and inform him of my intention, which will be the termination of our intimacy I suppose whenever it appears. Adieu dear Hilgrove, and let me hear of your reformation.

J. BENSON.



L E T T E R XVIII.

To Mrs. ADDERLEY.

**I** Thought when I wrote last, that I should have been able to inform you, my dear Bell, that Benson had surrendered his heart into my hands, that he had made me the mistress of his fate; and that you might have congratulated me in the words of the song, by telling me,

That cold flinty heart it is you who have warm'd.

But



But such have been the obstacles that have intervened, that I can only find by his eyes, which if I can read their silent but eloquent language, that he laments as much as I do the want of opportunity to tell me all his fond heart labours with. Those eyes surely tell truth. The owner of them is a stranger to imposition. He is not *adroit* enough in seizing those little advantages that the variety of situations might afford him to pay homage to me, and convince me of his passion: there is too much of that simplicity in his character. How can I blame him? It is his respect for me prevents his speaking, he is afraid of disobliging me. Ah! did he but know what passes in my heart! But Sir Edward is not to be despised for all this. Benson has caused a delirium in my head: I cannot command my judgment or my reason, and the consequence is that I have neglected the poor Baronet, and drove him almost to despair; but it will never  
satisfy

satisfy my ambition to have only one lover  
 in my train : nor can I shake off my former  
 admirers, whose rank and consequence in  
 life make them more to be attended to on  
 that account than Benson, who seems no-  
 thing more than a plain country gentle-  
 man. These thoughts return to me in the  
 hours of cool reflection : or I may say, with-  
 out transgressing the truth, between the  
 fits of my disorder ; for such a one I ne-  
 ver was seized with before—To be sure,  
 the Baronet had half persuaded me to  
 be civil to him before I saw Benson, who  
 though he is handsomer, is not in the  
 whole preferable to the former. Yet,  
 what am I saying ! have I not declared my  
 wishes to know the charming Benson's sen-  
 timents ? am I not lamenting the want of  
 opportunity to hear him confess himself my  
 slave ? and can I prefer any body before  
 him ? I am sadly perplexed, Bell, I assure  
 you between ambition and its companion,  
 pride ; and, what shall I call it ?--not love, for  
 that would carry all before it. It is my wish

to

to rule over every heart. I am not to be limited in my conquests: and shall I subject myself to one tyrant? No, Bell, no; it is too soon yet to sink into the wife. That name is an antidote to pleasure, these ten years at least. But would it not be happiness itself to be the wife of Benson? Would he not smile on me then as he does now? Would not the same charming sounds meet my ravished ears, and with augmented harmony, when they spoke the tender sentiments of his delicate and enraptured soul? Is not my fortune sufficient to procure us all the *agreemens* of life? and what more is wanting? I must cease to argue in this manner, or I shall jump out of the window after him. Advise me, dear Bell, what course I am to take; but bid me not relinquish my plans of conquest. Once for all, adieu.

EM. MITCOMBE.

L E T T E R XIX.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esquire.

SIR Edward Wilmington has put his design of being better acquainted with me in practice, and has done me the honour of a visit.

“I was determined to be upon a more friendly footing with you, Mr. Benson, and though you never would meet my wishes to establish an intimacy, I am come to demand it of you.”

My reply was such as his politeness merited. Our conversation was general for a little while; he soon turned it to a very particular object.

“Among the fine women with which London abounds, have you not fix’d upon one to present your heart to? or perhaps you left that behind you in the country.”

I assured him to the contrary.

“As

“As for me,” added he, “all the world is acquainted with my *penchant* for Miss Mitcombe: I suppose I shall find a dangerous rival in you with her.”

“Why should you suppose her so bad a judge of merit, as to put me in competition with Sir Edward Wilmington.”

“Ah,” replied he, smiling, “you are unwilling to make a discovery of your sentiments: but I assure you the world has given me a rival in you, and, in my apprehension, a very formidable one. But, be convinced from my candour, that though I love Miss Mitcombe extremely, and have long loved her, nor have I been entirely unsuccessful in winning her approbation to receive me as her admirer, yet I shall not be the less your friend for your having a regard for her: on the contrary, I shall tell you how I stand with her at present; and if you have urged your  
“suit

"suit to her, will leave you at entire liberty to acquaint me with it, or not."

"So generous a proceeding must entitle you to a mutual confidence."

"I press you not to it, but though I am convinced that there are some others who make pretensions to her favour, there is none of them whom I would so far make acquainted with the situation of my heart. I have that opinion of your honour and candour, that confirms me in my resolution of endeavouring to make you my friend. I have been Miss Mitcombe's humble servant near two years. The sight of her at one of the publick resorts of company, gave me a good opinion of her personal merit, and as she visited some families whom I knew, an introduction gave me an opportunity of making myself better acquainted with her character. She seemed a most desirable object, and in hopes of render-



“ing myself agreeable to her, I pursued  
“her. My fortune and qualifications were  
“not objected to by her father; and it  
“was not till after some time that she  
“would suffer me to acquaint her with  
“my passion. In this attendance on her  
“I was not so blinded by my affection  
“as not to perceive that there were some  
“little faults mingled with her perfec-  
“tions. She is vain of her charms, fond  
“of adoration, and will spare no pains  
“to add more lovers to her train. In  
“the course of my dangling you must natu-  
“rally suppose that I have met with many  
“mortifications, at seeing others who were  
“only the favourite of the minute, re-  
“ceived into good graces, and preferred  
“to me. I may say as Mellefont does  
“in *The way of the world*, of Millamant;  
“I have studied her faults, and got them  
“by heart, with a determination to break  
“with her; but by making myself fami-  
“liar with them they appear as nothing.”

“ But

" But this was not unattended with some  
 " pleasing circumstances. She has given  
 " me assurances of her regard, in such  
 " a manner that she can't well disengage  
 " herself from. But I know her fickle as  
 " air; and have before now seen her,  
 " when I thought her, most complying and  
 " kind, fly from me with somebody she  
 " never saw before; but the reconcilia-  
 " tions that have ensued from these little  
 " quarrels, that such behaviour could not  
 " fail to occasion, have been so delight-  
 " ful, that I could never put those re-  
 " solutions I formed in the moment of  
 " my wrath in execution; and I became  
 " more and more enamoured. Even the  
 " other night she did not fail to give my  
 " hopes encouragement, and behaved then  
 " in such a manner, as, had you seen her,  
 " must have alarmed you. Upon this foun-  
 " dation I visit Miss Mitcombe, and con-  
 " fess that I have not fortitude to shake  
 " off her chains, which, though heavy,

“are rendered lighter to me from having  
“worn them so long. Since your arrival  
“in town I have not found her so kind  
“as formerly to me. I can only attri-  
“bute this change in her manner of be-  
“haviour to your influence. This winter  
“was to have given me her hand, as I  
“have the greatest reason to believe from  
“the letters I received from her. But  
“at this moment I seem as distant from  
“the accomplishment of my wishes as the  
“instant I first addressed her. Let me  
“know then in what degree of estima-  
“tion you are with her; that if I see  
“no possibility of recovering her esteem,  
“I may endeavour to wean myself from  
“an attachment that will destroy me.”

I remained silent. Great was my confusion, greater my perplexity in what manner to receive or give credit to this speech. My not answering, alarm'd him; he look'd affected with what he had said, and his voice assumed a graver tone.

“I

" I assure you Mr. Benson, if you have  
 " prevailed on Miss Mitcombe to admit  
 " your addresses, and if she has received  
 " you favourably, even to my prejudice,  
 " I shall be glad to know it, that I may  
 " make a fool of myself no longer. Nor  
 " shall it be any means of preventing  
 " me from enjoying the pleasure of your  
 " acquaintance. I shall look upon your  
 " success as a misfortune to me, without  
 " harbouring any resentment against you.  
 " But if you can so far have pity on me,  
 " as to acquaint me with your sentiments  
 " concerning her, it will be doing me a  
 " kindness, and acting like a man of ho-  
 " nour."

This address was too interesting and  
 affecting to refuse to comply with it. I  
 informed him of every thing from my  
 first acquaintance with her; let him into  
 the situation of my heart, and assured  
 him, that though I had conceived an af-  
 fection for her, that it was neither so vi-

olent, or of so long duration as his, and, like a torch just lighted, was liable to be extinguish'd by the smallest accident. I proceeded to assure him, that I would never interfere in Miss Mitcombe's affections. He interrupted me—

“ I require not that, or any other sacrifice from you. If you please her more than I do, it would make us both unhappy, were we to be united without a mutual regard. But as I cannot be at once induced to relinquish my dearest hopes, let us make a fair trial whether you can gain her, or I can be able to bring her back again to the esteem she once professed for me, or be forced to give her up to you in case you should be successful.”

My heart felt for the unhappy Sir Edward. I endeavoured to persuade him to think otherwise of me than a person who designed him an injury, and that in so tender a point, that I considered it my mis-

misfortune to have occasioned him any uneasiness; and that had I known her pre-engagement to him, I would have most studiously avoided attaching myself to Miss Mitcombe. Every thing that might serve to restore him to peace, I mentioned, and in such a manner, with regard to my own conduct, as would please him. He departed more assured than he came to me, and left me to my contemplations. It is needless to mention, that they turned upon the conversation I had with him. And the first thing that offer'd itself to me was, a doubt, whether I should give entire credit to what he had mention'd to me concerning Miss Mitcombe. Perhaps, said I to myself, this may be only a pretence to alienate my affections from her, and to make a merit of his deceiving me to her, who must necessarily despise me for entertaining such bad opinions of her, only from the meer report of my rival. But would that rival be guilty of such ma-

H 4

nifest



nifest violation of truth, ever to gain such a point? Would he forfeit the character for integrity and honour, that he so long possessed? It is hardly possible; besides, the generosity and candour of his demeanor forbids me to think he could be so disingenuous in another matter. If she is so fickle, so fond of vanity, such a coquette, I have less dependance on her favour than he has, who has by his long services and constant attachment merited her regard. Can she ever forget the indulgencies she has granted to him? and will not the man who has obtained them from her, when single, solicit a restoration of them when married? let them be ever so innocent, yet they argue a liking, a predilection that ill accords with the purity of a woman's inclinations towards her husband, I mean such as they ought to be. I remained long perplexed in what manner to act, for I would not be the means of giving uneasiness to the man  
who

who had the prior, the superior right to enjoy Miss Mitcombe's hand and fortune, and whose good qualities deserved her. Apgill was the man I pitched upon to resolve my doubts. His long intimacy with Sir Thomas's family must have enabled him to investigate their characters, and to distinguish men by their prevailing passions. If he can be induced to communicate his notions to me, it will clear up this matter, and determine me how to act. Necessary as it is for me to take home a wife, whose wealth may serve to repair the breaches that have been unhappily made in my fortune, yet, to so domestic an animal as I am, what could be a greater plague than a wife, who prided herself in being a coquette, and encouraging admirers?

Thine ever,

GEORGE BENSON.

H 5 LETTER

## LETTER XX.

To the same.

**A** Conversation with Asgill has settled the point. He came to see me, and I repaid his former confidence in me by relating what had passed between Sir Edward and me.

“That’s a worthy young man,” replied he, “and has told you nothing but the truth. He is fond of her I believe, and many a scurvy trick has she played him. Before I would be subservient to her whims and humours, she might hang. But he is fastened to the chain, which he cannot break, and she’ll make him shew as many tricks for her amusement as her tame monkey. He was right when he informed you of her passion for conquest. Nothing is to be compared to the acquisition of a new lover, for the sake of which she will despise and maltreat the old ones. But I suppose that will

“ will be a very trifling consideration to you,  
 “ her person and fortune will make ample  
 “ amends for her coquetry.”

“ Far, very far from it : nothing should  
 “ bribe me to become the husband of such  
 “ a woman, whose fortune would enable to  
 “ indulge her passion for admiration to its  
 “ greatest extent ; and be the means of con-  
 “ tinual and eternal uneasiness to me.  
 “ Your opinion of her has confirmed me in  
 “ what manner to behave, and as Sir Ed-  
 “ ward is so strongly attached to her, I shall  
 “ endeavour to promote his interest with  
 “ her, by every means in my power. How  
 “ that is to be done must depend upon cir-  
 “ cumstances.”

“ Why, that must be considered, and  
 “ you shall not want my assistance, though  
 “ the Baronet does not look upon me in  
 “ the light of a friend. But it is somewhat  
 “ extraordinary to me that a young man as  
 “ you are, should thus relinquish the chance  
 “ of acquiring a splendid fortune and a fine

“ woman, and give her up to another, when  
 “ there is a great likelihood that you might  
 “ be able to obtain her.”

“ That fortune could never make me  
 “ happy with a woman of her temper Mr.  
 “ Afgill : and though my fortune is not  
 “ large, I cannot think of augmenting it at  
 “ the price of my happiness. I must be  
 “ happy with a wife.”

“ Psha,” said he, interrupting with an  
 impatience in his manner. “ Married and  
 “ happy, that’s not to be had. Things more  
 “ incongruous in their natures, are not to  
 “ be met with. Fire and water, heat and  
 “ cold shall unite sooner than matrimony  
 “ and happiness.

And that’s the reason, as some guess,  
 There is in heav’n no marriages.  
 Their business there is only love,  
 Which marriage is not like t’improve.  
 Love that’s too generous to abide  
 To be, against its nature, tied.

For

For where 'tis of its self inclin'd,  
It breaks loose when it is confin'd;  
And, like the soul its harbourer,  
Debarr'd the freedom of the air,  
Disdains against it's will to stay,  
But struggles out, and flies away.  
And therefore never can comply  
T' endure the matrimonial tye,  
That binds the female and the male,  
Where th' one is but the others bail.  
Like Roman gaolers when they slept,  
Chain'd to the prisoners they kept.

“ So says the author of Hudibras, and very truly.”

“ And now you have done with this extraordinary rhapsody against matrimony, let me know why there is no such thing as a man's being happy in that state.”

“ Because there are ten thousand reasons. And I shall have but a poor opinion of your sense, if you can ask such a question.”

“ I suppose you speak from experience : or you could not entertain such notions.”

“ What-



“ Whatever I may speak from, I desire  
“ the conversation may be drop’d. Perhaps  
“ I will tell you at some future time my  
“ reasons, and perhaps I may not. Have  
“ you seen Captain Bailey lately ?”

“ No ; I don’t chuse to go too often  
“ there.”

“ Another person visits there, who has  
“ other designs than you had in going  
“ there.”

“ You mean Sir Thomas, I suppose ?”

“ You are right : since I gave him a  
“ stroke about it the other day, he has not  
“ asked me to accompany him, and thinks  
“ he shall escape my observation. But I  
“ know his haunts, and shall only wait to  
“ see the girl’s inclination before I discover  
“ him in the proper light. If she is as she  
“ ought to be, I shall acquaint her with the  
“ matter, and she will be able to regulate  
“ her own conduct ; and spare her unfortu-  
“ nate parents the mortification of hearing  
“ and knowing that the man who pretended

“ to

“ to be their benefactor is a rascal. If she  
 “ is as the generality of her sex are, I must  
 “ be forced to tell them at once that they  
 “ may guard themselves if possible from  
 “ shame. Let it be as it may, he shall not  
 “ fail of having a raven in me, who will not  
 “ cease croaking in his ears, and if he has  
 “ any remorse, I may do him some good.  
 “ It is base to the last degree, to take ad-  
 “ vantage of the unbounded gratitude they  
 “ profess for him, as the author of their pre-  
 “ sent happiness, and under that disguise to  
 “ attempt the daughter’s honour. This is  
 “ the kind of men to whom my severity is  
 “ displeasing. When I wage war with  
 “ vice and folly, I draw an host of foes  
 “ upon my back : let me ridicule worth and  
 “ virtue, and they shall applaud me. But  
 “ to a man of honour the approbation of  
 “ fools is a disgrace.”

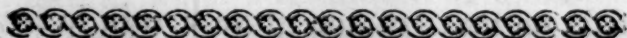
He left me strangely puzzled in what  
 manner to behave to Miss Mitcombe.  
 I had already gone too far to recede  
 with

with honour. But as yet, I had come to no such explanations of my sentiments as would call my character in question, if I falsified it. The opportunity to speak of the interests my heart was just beginning to harbour, and the want of it, which I so severely lamented, has now turned out the luckiest thing in the world. So true it is, that short-sighted as we are, we only judge of things from their present tendency without having any regard to their consequences. Another half hour would have devoted me to Miss Mitcombe, bound me a slave to her foibles, the dupe of her artifices. Another month would have thrown me from the pinnacle of hope, when somebody else had succeeded me in her esteem, and I had been too much entangled in her snares to have extricated myself from them. What would have become of me? You would have thought and acted on the occasion in a manner quite different from me, but I confess more suitable to the situation of  
your

your affairs. Your volatile disposition could have immediately changed the object of your regard, and have returned her inconstancy. It would have had other effects on me: of too grave a turn to treat those matters as trifles, I should have believed for real proofs of esteem, those encouragements, which her desire to secure me would have induced her to shew me. My gratitude would have encreased my passion. I should have given myself up entirely to the delightful delusion. Where I found my hopes all frustrated and deceived, I should have abandoned myself to despair: that is now happily avoided, and I am restored to my liberty again. Asgill has awakened my curiosity by telling me, he may at some time or another unfold himself to me. I should think there must be occurrences well worthy observation in his history, if it corresponds with his present manner and sentiments. If he permits me, I will impart it to you. Perhaps it may serve to amend  
you,

you, for thou requirest amendment. Thine truly,

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER. XXI.

TO MISS SEATON.

**I** Should ill deserve your friendship, if I concealed the cause of my sudden departure from you, dear Susanna; and you will be astonished to see the London post-mark on this epistle. 'Tis very true, I am in that dear seat of pleasures, which you have so often heard me regret my absence from, and which nothing could have so soon recalled me to, as the present occasion of my journey. Thou art young, art inexperienced. But you are not ignorant that the desire of a little happy retaliation, which the malevolent call revenge, very often sets us in motion when nothing else will. That is my

my case at this moment. Why I seek that revenge you shall know.

Sacrificed in my younger days, in the bloom of youth, to the arms of a man I did not love, and whose subsequent behaviour never was calculated to inspire the tender passion, the beginning of my life afforded me very little pleasure. My husband was above double my age, and having secured me in the matrimonial chain, never endeavoured to make it pleasing to me: it was enough for him that I was bound fast. Death at last relieved me, and put me in possession of that jointure for which I was originally sold, and gave me what was yet more dear to me, my liberty. I was not past the age in which our sex ceases to be charming. Nor were those charms overlooked: for I had many admirers. Nor were they all solely attracted by interest: for I could number among them some whose fortunes and expectations far exceeded my hopes. Among these



these was Mr. Southern, the descendant of an honourable family, and in expectation of a title at the decease of an uncle; his present fortune was large, and beyond my wishes. But he was every thing beside that woman could love—young, amorous, handsome, well-shaped—the pride of his own sex, the admiration of ours. Such was the man who won my heart—he claimed it by desert:

He was the very joy of all that saw him,  
 Form'd to delight, to love, and to persuade;  
 Impassive spirits and angelic natures  
 Might have been charm'd like yeilding human  
                   weakness,  
 Stoop'd from their heav'n, and listen'd to his  
                   talking.

Happy though I was in his affection, and greatly though my heart was captivated by him, yet I smothered my passion, and wish'd to see stronger proofs of his love, ere I rendered myself an easy conquest to his arms. His behaviour

viour confirm'd my most sanguine hopes : and I had no other thoughts but how best to return his affection and repay his constancy. At that moment, the pleasantest I had yet experienced, Emily Mitcombe, to whose family you have often heard me mention myself related, came to town. She saw the amiable Southern : and whether she really affected him, for he was made to inspire love, or whether she was uneasy at the preference he gave me, I know not, but she determined to rob me of my heart's only pleasure, and too fatally she succeeded. Taken with I know not what ideal beauty in her, the treacherous, the inconstant Southern forsook me, and lifted in her train, leaving me to despair and shame. I would not encrease her triumph, by taking notice to her of this circumstance ; and however painful it might be to conceal my sentiments, I had prudence enough to preserve my temper, and in some little time  
after

after retired to the country under pretence of illness, where I have since resided almost entirely, and where I had the pleasure of first knowing you. Mr. Southern did not remain long attached to Emily. Whether offended by her treatment of him, whether repenting his behaviour to me, and willing to return, though ashamed, and not able to endure the reproaches of his own conscience, he went abroad. Emily only designs to ensnare lovers, and to deprive her friends of them. No spider spreads more cobwebs than she does; and many are the silly flies who are taken in them. A passion for universal admiration rules all her actions: to that she is devoted, and in the gratification of that her greatest pleasure consists. In the ensuing summer she returned to the country, and, as if she desired to insult my misfortunes, sent me an invitation couched in the most friendly terms, to spend a few months

I

with

with her. I went, and so far from giving her the least cause to think I was offended at her behaviour, I had the satisfaction to wind myself into her confidence, and she looked upon me as her best friend. I entered with spirit into all her designs, cherished and improved her most favourite notions, and flattered her vanity, which would ever lead her to make herself ridiculous. Did she think I was a log or a stone? that I was senseless, or was so void of honest, of justifiable resentment, as to forgive the insult she had put upon me, or forget the cause of my wrongs? She was much mistaken if she did; and my turn may come to turn the tables upon her. If it does, and why should it not? for I am not so despicable either in face or person, the world shall be a witness of my triumph. She herself has afforded me the means of it. Her letters to me give an account of her sentiments, and inform me

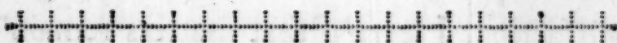
me of the number and variety of lovers. One at last seems to have fixed her heart, for the descriptions she gives of him, are too animated to escape from one who cannot love. He had declared himself to her if opportunity had not been wanting: this is some days ago, nor has any time been more favourable since. She waits the full explanation of his sentiments, with an impatience not to be described. In this interval my design is to cross her hopes, to blast her expectations, and let her know, by experience, a taste of the woe she brought upon me. Nor am I deficient in means to allure the man from her, whom she seems to fix her heart upon: and I will spare nothing to render her as miserable as I have been, that is, if she can feel as much.

This then is the cause of my abrupt departure, and you will allow that it is a very sufficient one. I have procured lodgings at no great distance from her father's

father's house, and to-morrow, which will be but the second day of my arrival, I shall begin my operations. Wish me success, my dear Susanna: be it as it will you shall hear of it:

Your sincere friend

ARA. ADDERLEY.



LETTER XXII.

To the same.

**M**Y sudden appearance at Sir Thomas Mitcombe's, you may suppose alarm'd my cousin, who enquired very particularly the cause of my coming up to London, when she supposed me settled for a long time in the country. Those questions I evaded, and placed my journey to the account of a frolic. Whether she believed me or no I can't tell, but my presence did not seem to give her any great pleasure. That was the least

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of



of my concern : but whatever she thought, her endeavours to conceal her chagrin were too visible to escape my notice. When we were left alone, I congratulated her on the happiness of meeting a lover so much suited to her taste, and who, ere this, had doubtless declared himself the victim of her charms. But, to my great satisfaction, I learn'd that matters remain'd in the same situation they were at the time of her writing last to me. This was the only opportunity for me to seize, and I began to praise her conduct in thus keeping her power over the filthy sex, without submitting to them. She was not insensible to the pleasing things I said ; and her consequence and importance, which seemed to be hurt by this delay of Mr. Benson's, for so is the favourite called, began to return again. In this interview she behaved very kindly to me, and pressed me to remain with her whilst in town : that I excused myself from, but promised  
to

to be with her as frequently as possible. Upon my asking some questions concerning Mr. Benson, she replied, she had not seen him these three days. A length of time that he had never absented himself before, and could attribute it to nothing but illness. Though she seemed to make light of it, yet I could read her uneasiness in the manner of her expression, and found she wish'd to see him more impatiently than she chose to acquaint me with: and this the more surpris'd me, as she was always open and without reserve in her letters to me, and never concealed her sentiments; but then I was at a distance, and could do her no hurt. At this juncture, she seemed to pay me the compliment of being afraid of me. I was more lucky than I expected at this visit, for Mr. Benson gave us the pleasure of seeing him. He is truly amiable, if his mind corresponds with his person. Sincerity and honour are visible in his countenance.

tenance. Next to Southern he is the man whom I should like most to partake of my bed and fortune. This is a revenge adequate to my wrongs, if I can effect it. It is worthy of me, and will only return Emily's treatment of me in kind. I am not without hopes of succeeding too. Benson saw me; he noticed me very particularly; he addressed himself to me very frequently—How sweet was the voice—how much sweeter would it be if tuned to the accents of love. This did not pass unheeded by Emily; her pride was hurt, and she saw that unless she shifted the scene, that I stood as great a chance of being the object of his admiration as herself. It happened to be a fine day, and she proposed a turn in the Park. It was agreed on; the lovely youth gallanted us, for he is yet in that state

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When youthful grace,  
And the first down begins to shade his face.

We were, indisputably, and without vanity, though I was of the party, the most charming trio in the place. Nor was the elegance, either in form or conversation lessened, when Sir Edward Wilmington, an old admirer of Emily's, joined us; for the conversation was sprightly, though I found Sir Edward wanted to make it particular with Emily, and I gave every assistance I could to him, by engaging Mr. Benson. This I knew was the most mortifying stroke she could receive, and I carried it as far as decency would permit. Sir Edward suffer'd for my proceedings; she was intolerably cross to him, and though Mr. Benson and I were laughing at one trifle or another, could she force a smile upon her countenance. She complained it was too cold, and resolved to return home. We mounted a *partie quarre* into the coach, and went to Sir Thomas's, though not in the best humour in the world with each other.

Sir Thomas kept the two gentlemen to dinner, and still she found me a thorn in her side. When left together in the evening, she would not complain of my behaviour, nor would she appear to think that he had given me the preference. Some of those vapours which will cloud the beauty of a slighted toast, gave her occasion to complain of illness; I took the hint, and retired. This afforded me a good opportunity of calling on her the next day, to know how she did; and she, who is not wanting in hypocrisy, was much rejoiced to see me again. I took advantage of this disposition, and remained with her in hopes of seeing Mr. Benson again; but in vain. The next day I was more lucky. And again, I had the happiness of being preferred to Emily. This opinion is not the result of vanity, but the effect of my charms. Emily's uneasiness sufficiently proved how mortifying the distinction he made was to her. I doubt  
not

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not of improving in his good graces. What a pleasure to be able to take such a man from my cousin, and to secure him for myself! How sweet is the execution of the law of retaliation. Adieu, dear Sukey, and believe me your sincere friend,

ARA. ADDERLEY.



L E T T E R. XXIII.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

**A** Mendment—Eh! Mr. Benson—I thank you kindly and heartily for your good wishes, and to give you all the satisfaction in my power, you must know that I am greatly mended, that is, in the opinion of my Dulcinea del Toboso. I shall bring it about at last. Madam begins to look at her dying swain with a little more complacency than usual. Had you been half as industrious about Miss Mitcombe, you might have had her before



this. But that cursed sentiment runs in your head, and while ever it does you will never do any good. Do you expect to find a woman perfect? — without foibles, whims, caprices, and a long list of *et cæteras* that thy delicate ears could never bear the repetition of? But all these thou must experience in thy commerce with the sex. I look upon them in another light, and do as the poet did:

I take her body, you her mind:  
Which has the better bargain?

And so a little innocent flirtation is sufficient to make you break off your affair with Miss Mitcombe, because your rival, and a peevish old fellow have told that she is fond of encouraging admirers—A great crime truly.— I wish my business would permit me to see London, I would take her from you all. If she liked me for a lover I would de-  
vote

vote myself to her—and then, stand clear. No one should approach her but myself. Not that I would do as the Irishman did, parade before her door to cut the throats of every other lover that approached her. No, I would so employ her attention, that she would have no leisure to think of any body else. If she was in a bad humour I would laugh her out of it; and if in a good one, tease her till I made her angry, for the sake of being friends again; praise my rivals for their defects, and condemn her for her good qualities. I would let her monkey loose to break her china. I'd bribe her chambermaid never to say a good word of me. In short I'd plague her so heartily, and puzzle her so much, that for mere quietness sake she should be glad to marry me.—Have mercy on me, a girl of her disposition, man, is not to be caught by a volley of sighs, or the point-blank shot of a languishing eye, as you

catch sparrows with chaff. You should like her the better for that little species of artifice and gaiety that seasons her actions. Surely she pays you the greater compliment if she prefers you to all the rest of her admirers. A woman without coquetry, is like meat without sauce. A plain piece of roast beef, that a man may eat his bellyfull of when he is hungry; his appetite is appeased, and there's an end of it. But there is no pleasure, no satisfaction, none of that *gout* which distinguishes and recommends the higher-flavour'd viands that one always returns to with rapture, and must eat of whether one will or no; where there is allure-ment and joy in the participation of them. Strike up to her, take a lesson from me, pursue it but for a month, and she'll throw her arms about your neck, and sing

I'm your's, if you are mine,  
Thus we seal, and thus we sign.

But

But I told you I was much mended; hear in what manner. I went to see my new-married dame; shook hands with the husband, and kissed the wife. When alone, I commended her spirit, approved her resolution, and laughed at myself. As her good man was in trade, would encourage new beginners, and ordered some things, which, nevertheless, I had very little occasion for. This produced an invitation to dine: only in the family way, if any thing extraordinary was provided, I would not stay. Nothing could exceed my humility and affability. I found the dame had prudence enough not to tell her husband of what had happened, which I conceived to be a very favourable omen. In some succeeding interviews I changed my note, and was dull, melancholly, sighed frequently, and looked wishfully. The alteration was perceived, and an enquiry made into the cause of it. The longer I knew her, the more I was convinced

of her merit, was sorry she had thrown away such eminent qualifications upon such a man as her husband, who could not put them in the conspicuous light they deserved: that I wished she had given me an opportunity of justifying myself before she had taken such a rash resolution; that I meant only as a little trial of her virtues, by taking such liberties as had unhappily incurred her displeasure; that it was too late to be recalled now, but had it been to do over again, myself, my fortune had all been devoted to her. I took occasion, during this pathetic harangue, to sigh like a furnace, which served to thaw the poor lady's icy heart. The predominant passion in woman is love of sway, and that only as it is the means of gratifying subordinations, such as dress, pré eminence, and those inferior tribes which vanity presides over and governs. Consequently, the person who deprives them of the opportunity

nity of indulging this favourite passion, is always, and very justly, deemed an enemy. Her husband could not, by any means, gratify her desire of shewing herself. He had taken her in the moments of her anger against me, and she was lost forever.—Another thing: No woman, however homely, but thinks her charms equal to any conquest. This was not the case with her, who was rather pretty. But how great was the difference, how much could she have boasted of such a conquest; not more from the advantages of fortune, than reclaiming a rake, a character I am very unfortunately branded with here. A comparison of this nature could not be favourable to her husband. I did not desire it should. What fraud have I been guilty of here? — Nature gave her vanity: if that runs away with her, is it my fault? Are not these passions taken advantage of every day, throughout the world? If distressed and  
indigent

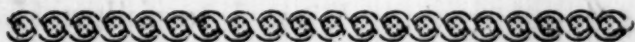


indigent merit cannot obtain the often-promised assistance from an arrogant haughty patron, but by praising him: though that praise may be flattery, is he to blame to use it? The leopard is struck by the hunter's dart while she views her beautiful spots in the mirror that is placed on purpose to gratify her pride, and attract the admiration of herself. The elephant falls into the pit, allured thither by the smell of the most exquisite fruits; and vanity throws women into our arms, when every other consideration would keep them from us. But that has no competitors in their breasts, and stifles every other passion and reflection. It is well for us it is so, or it would be very hard to get at them. Do you take advantage of that vanity in Miss Mitcombe, for that only causes her to delight in so many suitors. Subdue that, or make it subservient to you, by properly indulging it; or feed it so, that it must expire when you cease to support

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support it. Be assured it is too dear to her to part with easily, and you will succeed, unless she is pre-engaged absolutely, and that the comparison of her deportment to you and Sir Edward Wilmington forbids me to think. She has not look'd upon you with the eyes of indifference: Are not all means allowable that can put you in possession of what you want? Why do you delay embracing it? Seize it while it is in your power, nor let vain and idle scruples stand between you and happiness. Adieu my good friend, and believe me thine, truly,

JAMES HILGROVE.



L E T T E R. XXIV.

TO Mr. HENRY THOMPSON.

**I**F I have not written to you so soon as I promised, impute it to your not having answered the letter you have already

ready received from me. Ah Thompson, is that neglect friendly, is it pardonable? You form'd my notions, you instructed my infancy to love, to honour virtue; should you cease to support my tottering steps, or confirm those principles you first instilled? Do you not relinquish your trust, when you abandon me to myself? Because you are not immediately with me, does your care, your regard for me, expire? Let your sentiments once more inspire me with the love of the beautiful, and the honest. Let your justice determine the nature of my actions, as I shall acquaint you with them; and let your kindness pardon, at the moment it points out my errors. Were I to follow Hilgrove's notions, who seeks only the sanction of convenience and custom, I should deviate far from the road you had pointed out to me, which led to happiness; nor can I reconcile his advice to the feelings of my own heart. Because I am so unhappily

happily embarrassed in my affairs, am I to add to my uneasiness by marrying a woman, whose conduct will, as I have but too much reason to suspect, give me cause to repent that union every hour of my life. I acknowledge its convenience, but must it therefore be right? Mr. Apgill's account of Miss Mitcombe's disposition was sufficient to deter me from thinking any more of her. And while I saw the necessity of breaking off an intimacy with her that grew more pleasing every day, I knew not in what manner to bring it about. Her beauty charm'd me, her delicacy delighted me, and her vivacity enchanted me; but to what purpose were these qualifications employed? In the vain, the idle desire of gaining a transitory praise were they employed, without any end, or any happiness to herself or others. Her heart, which was what I wished to be acquainted with, is now opened to my view. And I lament that

I was

I was so liable to be deceived. Can humanity delight in giving pain? And does not benevolence study to relieve the wretched? Her conduct, by inspiring false hopes, gives pain, and confers misery. Where is the sincerity that should preside over a woman's actions? There is in her much of artifice, which borders too closely on deceit, to inspire love in my breast. Perhaps I judge too hardly of her. My ignorance of the world, and its customs, may lead me astray, and forming my notions on the models of antiquity, I may have erected an idol in my fancy which I am ready to worship, but of which I shall never find a likeness in human life: that will for a while retard my happiness, but when I find that which I seek exists not, I must only admire what approaches nearest to it. She, for whom I first conceived a tender sentiment, is far from resembling such a model: and though it may give me pain to endeavour  
to

to forget her, yet it must be done, and not more for my own sake than Sir Edward Wilmington's, whose services and affiduities had won her heart before I was thought of. To him who loves, who adores her in spite of all her foibles, must she be surrendered by me. Every endearing idea must now be banished, and I will deserve his friendship by endeavouring to crown his passion with success. But willing as I am to serve him, the means of doing it are, in my opinion, incompatible with honour, with truth; and can I then comply with them? Judge, and determine—

Sir Edward came to visit me again.—

“Your resolution which you delay’d  
 “acquainting me with, when I opened  
 “my heart to you before,” said he, “is  
 “to determine the condition of my future  
 “life, whether it is to be miserable or  
 “happy, which it cannot be if not spent  
 “with my Emily. I see too plainly that  
 “she



“ she looks on you with more favourable  
 “ eyes than on me, and doubt not but  
 “ she would speedily yield to your soli-  
 “ citations. I must be doomed to the ex-  
 “ quisite torments of seeing her bestow  
 “ herself on another, and be utterly lost  
 “ to me. I blame her not for thinking  
 “ well of you, and yet she should not  
 “ forget her former kindness to me. I  
 “ cannot be angry with her for admiring  
 “ you, whom I confess superior to me in  
 “ every good quality : but yet, I was once  
 “ thought amiable !”

“ Nothing can be done to serve you  
 “ that I will not do, Sir Edward. I  
 “ will acknowledge that she had inspired  
 “ me with very tender sentiments, but,  
 “ happily for us both, they were yet so  
 “ lately conceived, that it costs me but  
 “ little pain to banish them for ever.”

“ Sure you do not mean to deceive  
 “ me. Can you have loved Emily Mit-  
 “ combe, and so coolly renounce the hopes  
 “ that

“that attend the delusive passion. What  
 “thanks do I owe you? and let me re-  
 “turn the obligation, by pointing out to  
 “me the means in which my grati-  
 “tude may repay you!

“Hear me, before you profess yourself  
 “so much obliged, for I would not willing-  
 “ly assume a virtue, when I have it not.  
 “Though enamoured of Miss Mitcombe’s  
 “person, I neither knew her manner or her  
 “disposition: both highly necessary, in-  
 “deed absolutely essential to be known be-  
 “fore the entrance into that state, which is  
 “only dissoluble by death. You yourself  
 “have informed me of both: her passion for  
 “admiration would make me wretched if I  
 “was her husband. And how could I think  
 “of becoming so when she has already be-  
 “stowed her heart and affections on you?  
 “The same excellencies that first inspired  
 “her with esteem for you still remain, and  
 “her conduct to you shews that you have  
 “done nothing worthy of being forsaken.  
 “I should

“ I should only enjoy a part of her affec-  
 “ tions ; and, naturally jealous in my temper,  
 “ every smile that she might accidentally con-  
 “ fer on you, would create uneasiness, not  
 “ to be described, not to be remedied. You  
 “ are not obliged to me then for my decla-  
 “ rations of service to you, which I again  
 “ repeat, and assure you, that direct me what  
 “ to do, and you shall see with what readi-  
 “ ness I will perform your desire.”

He started from his seat, took me by the  
 hand : every action spoke his rapture, every  
 word his gratitude for the concession I had  
 made him. He stiled me his preserver,  
 his best friend. When his tumults had a  
 little subsided, I applied to him to put me  
 in a method of assisting him in the manner  
 I wished and intended.

“ You have said,” continued I, “ that Miss  
 “ Mitcombe regards me with too favourable  
 “ eyes. Whether it is so or no, yet your  
 “ suspicion gives it the appearance of truth.  
 “ After all the civilities that Sir Thomas’s  
 “ family

“ family have loaded me with, it would be  
 “ so ungrateful to abstain at once entirely  
 “ from visiting them, that such a thing can-  
 “ not with prudence be proposed or thought  
 “ of. But you may depend upon it, I will  
 “ avoid all particularities with her, if that  
 “ conduct will in the least contribute to  
 “ your success.”

“ That will be of service : but were she  
 “ once to be offended with you upon any  
 “ occasion, I know her to be haughty and  
 “ resentful so far, that by taking advantage  
 “ of her passions, I might gain her in a mo-  
 “ ment, when years would be spent otherwise  
 “ in vain.”

“ But how can that be effected, or in what  
 “ manner would you have me offend either  
 “ her family or her ?”

“ I know not, but, I have found out,”  
 added he, recollecting himself, “ the luckiest  
 “ thing in the world. You saw Mrs. Ad-  
 “ derley, the cousin of Emily ? a pretty  
 “ woman, a widow, and what will be still  
 “ more

“ more conducive to our design, she is one  
 “ whom Emily looks upon with eyes of  
 “ emulation. Be particular to her, address  
 “ her. The consequence will be happy to  
 “ me, I have no doubt.”

I paused, uncertain in what manner to answer.

“ Do not refuse this only way that is left  
 “ to make me happy,”—continued he with  
 a mournful air : “ It is the only expedient,  
 “ and the most probable that can be thought  
 “ on. Do not leave me hopeless and wretch-  
 “ ed.”

“ To what do you press me Sir Edward? to  
 “ a forfeiture of my truth and my honour.  
 “ Can I so far forget both as to offer address-  
 “ ses to a woman, whom my heart is not at  
 “ all interested for? In what light shall I  
 “ be held, or how shall I sustain the re-  
 “ proaches that she will so justly load me  
 “ with, when my perfidy comes to be dis-  
 “ covered?”

He answered only by laughing.

“ Is

“Is it so ridiculous a circumstance,” said I, “to be considered as base and detestable, “to endeavour to gain a woman’s affections “only for the sake of relinquishing and exposing her to shame, and being covered “with infamy myself?”

“I cannot avoid laughing at the singularity of your notions, Mr. Benson. A commerce that is carried on every day, ceases “to be considered in that light which you “so industriously place it in. Custom reconciles it to us, and nothing is more common.”

“That can never justify it to me, nor can “I offer any argument, nor can I be convinced why any asseveration I might use, “or any promise I might make to Mrs. “Adderley, would not be as binding on me “as any other obligation to any other person, and I as much constrained to perform “it. That others are guilty of this perfidy “is no reason why I should likewise stain “my name with it.”



“ Ah Benson ! if you thus can preserve  
“ your integrity with such scrupulous exact-  
“ nefs, I shall stand but a small chance of  
“ succeeding with Emily by your means. If  
“ you will not openly address Mrs. Adder-  
“ ley, at least be a little particular in your  
“ behaviour, sufficiently so to alarm  
“ Emily’s pride, who cannot bear to see  
“ any body civil to her cousin before her.”

“ I will do every thing to serve you con-  
“ sistent with honour. Can Asgill be of  
“ any service to you ?”

“ Ah ! I fear his severity.”

“ You need not, he is your friend. Shall  
“ I communicate to him your situation and  
“ designs ?”

“ Do as your discretion prompts you.”

I had an opportunity of seeing Asgill,  
soon after Sir Edward quitted me. I told  
him what had passed, and communicated  
my scruples to him. He treated them in a  
manner I did not expect from one who is

apt

apt to condemn a deviation from right in others.

“Why should not you serve your friend,” said he, “and make the enemies to the peace, the happiness, the virtues of our sex, ridiculous? Would that I either possessed your youth, or those pretty external qualifications that you do, I would act quite another part. Don’t hesitate a moment. Set the two women by the ears: there’s nothing they will quarrel sooner about than a pretty fellow, and at the same time they will give any thing that can be asked of them, to snatch a lover away from one another: for

Womankind more joy discovers,  
In making fools, than keeping lovers.

“It is only revenging in part the wrongs that your sex has at different times suffered from them. I will assist you and partake your triumph.”

“How inconsistent are you? — Can  
 “you who expressed such abhorrence of  
 “Sir Thomas Mitcombe’s designs against  
 “Miss Bailey, ever advise me to pursue  
 “the same course?”

“It is you who are inconsistent. Is there  
 “no difference in their situations? Is not  
 “that girl whom Sir Thomas designs to  
 “destroy, innocent, artless? Has she not  
 “experienced the griping hand of distress?  
 “Has she not felt the rod of adversity?  
 “She yet smarts from the strokes, and  
 “looks up with gratitude to the man  
 “who, as she thinks, softens the pain and  
 “removes the woe. In him it is fraud, it  
 “is seduction, it is villainy. She will not  
 “suffer alone. Her wretched parents, al-  
 “most crushed with the weight of their  
 “misfortunes, will not be able to support  
 “this additional blow. Turn we to the  
 “other side. Miss Mitcombe and her cou-  
 “sin know no misfortunes, but what their  
 “caprice creates. Fortune has bestowed  
 “affluence

“affluence on them, and they only distress  
 “themselves with artificial wants. Luxu-  
 “rious, wanton, artful, the widow cannot  
 “bear her cousin should have admirers,  
 “when she is without them. Emily wants  
 “to engross all the adoration to herself. Is  
 “it a crime to plague them only by the in-  
 “dulgence of their own wishes, by the gra-  
 “tifications of their own desires. Though  
 “I abhor the man who would rob innocence  
 “of its honour, yet I would join any one who  
 “would punish the vain and proud. You  
 “are the person in whose hands such a pow-  
 “er is now placed, and you ought to be  
 “put in a pillory with a fool’s cap on your  
 “head, if you let it escape you, and do not  
 “make a proper use of it.”

“You are severe on the Ladies this morn-  
 “ing!”

“I have reason, for I know them. And  
 “when you come to my age, and have had  
 “my experience of the sex, which never-  
 “theless I should be sorry for, you will be

“ more so perhaps. But however, don’t  
 “ you be puppy enough to imagine your-  
 “ self a very fine fellow, because these wo-  
 “ men are so willing to jump at you. For  
 “ as I have already told you, it is not from  
 “ any other motives than to have the plea-  
 “ sure and glory of making you a fool them-  
 “ selves, and to prevent any other woman  
 “ from doing so. You may be even with  
 “ them if you will: and I am sure that the  
 “ thoughts of being a wife so soon would  
 “ be very shocking to Miss Mitcombe, in  
 “ her moments of gaiety. As she would  
 “ be unwilling to submit to the authority of  
 “ an husband in the midst of her triumphs,  
 “ and is only to be caught by irritating her  
 “ passions, if you have a mind to serve  
 “ your friend, you will do what he desires ;  
 “ though truly I think he is most to be  
 “ pitied.”

What do you think of this advice my  
 dear Thompson? Am I to assume the cha-  
 racter of an executioner, and punish other  
 peoples

peoples foibles? Is it not a dangerous attempt? Give me your opinion. I know the delicacy of your sentiments, and am acquainted with your truth and sincerity. Let these direct me, and vouchsafe to become my guide on this occasion. I would wish even to avoid the appearance of falsehood and deceit: for there is no knowing how far into the road of vice, the smallest deviation from the path of virtue may lead us. The mustard, which is the smallest of all grains, in time shoots up into a large tree. Yours, truly,

GEORGE BENSON.



## L E T T E R XXV.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

**E** Steem it not to proceed from neglect, my ever honour'd, my truly beloved friend, for by so endearing an

K 4

appel-



appellation you have permitted me to address you, that so long has my answer been delay'd. To other causes must it be attributed—to the candour and ingenuousness of my disposition. Permit me, in this instance only, to praise myself, whilst, in others, I must be condemned. 'Tis a punishment due to me, at this moment, to be consulted by you on the delicacy and honour that a virtuous man ought to preserve in his intercourse with the fairer sex; when I am unfit and incapable to offer you any advice, without doing the greatest injustice to you, condemning my own conduct, and impeaching the purity of my own sentiments. How weak is the human heart, and how unable to oppose the passions that invade it on every side! The boasted power of reason is impotent: and those who rely most on it, have generally the mortification to find the insufficiency of it. I will explain these contradictions, by informing  
you

you of the situation of my heart at this moment. You who feel the approaches of a tender passion, whose heart is softened by love, can perhaps find excuses for me, or, it may be, pity me. A consolation I cannot find from the rest of the world.

Though young enough to be your companion, when I first took charge of your education, yet was not my heart free from the attractions of love. My father, who had been presented to his living by yours, preserved, all his life, the greatest veneration and respect for your family. From him I imbibed, in my earliest youth, those prejudices in my favour which time has confirmed. That venerable, that worthy parent, instructed my infancy. My later years were indebted to him for the principles of virtue: principles that he himself ever adhered to; and which I in vain endeavour to imitate. But so great was the opinion the late Lord Stanton had

of my father's notions, and the goodness of his heart, that at his request I superintended your education. That your parts, quick and strong, your memory tenacious, your capacity extensive, and application equal to any task, has done yourself and family honour is not to be attributed to me. To those qualities alone, excelling most others, which heaven has so liberally conferred on you, is the progress you made to be attributed. In those hours which youth in general dedicated to play and dissipation, you pursued your study, and, in a short time, I was but the companion, not the tutor or director of your literary pursuits. The allowance, greater than my presumption could suppose me entitled to, which your generous father gave me, helped also to support my mother, who was left, by her husband's death, in but indigent circumstances. That allowance; your mother, with truly bountiful and benevolent mind, has

has since continued. To this unhappy situation of my affairs, you attributed those sighs which so frequently burst from my breast, and which you so often asked the occasion of. Your delicacy prevented your insisting on being satisfied of the cause of my uneasiness; and though on the most perfect footing of friendship and intimacy with you, yet I could not persuade myself to open my heart to you. But this silence did not proceed from any supposition, that, had I informed you of the secret my breast labour'd with, that I should have been betrayed: but I confess I was ashamed to acquaint you with my weakness; for I was aw'd in your presence who had not such feelings, and I was also unwilling to inspire your tender mind with the notion of so bewitching, so fatal a passion as love. Would it not have been a breach of the duty I owed to you, to have led your early steps into the path of folly? for

so I may justly term it. I buried in silence my affection for a young woman whose birth was equal to mine, and whom I had been acquainted with in the beginning of my life. My friendship for her ripened into a softer passion: nor was she insensible of the truth of it when communicated to her. She is delicate in her person, and, though no beauty, agreeable in her aspect. Her manners are gentle and pure, and her mind is the repository of all the female virtues, for none more than an amiable sweetness of temper, and mildness of disposition that never fails to conciliate, and secure esteem. Such is the woman, the first love of my heart, the worthy Louisa. Her fortune is but small, and my engagements with you, and prudential motives, prevented us from being united. We saw each other by every opportunity, and a regular correspondence informed each other constantly of the situation of our hearts. I looked  
forward

foward to the time that was to join us with rapture, and reckoned every intervening hour with impatience. Though she lived with an uncle, she was entirely exempted from every dependance on him, and what little fortune she had was at her own disposal. But she remained with her uncle's family, who were all very fond of her, as well at their request, as thinking it the most proper place for an unmarried woman to abide at. They had formerly been our neighbours, but some reasons occasioned them to remove to another part of the country distant from us. This could not alter the mutual sentiments of esteem, which Louisa and I still retained for each other. A promise to procure me a settlement in the church, made me resolve to take orders if I could get myself ordained, which I feared would be very difficult to be done, as I had taken no degrees at any university. But your worthy mother also  
promised



promised to use her interest with some bishop to put me in orders. To prepare myself for the proper performance of the sacred function, when I quitted you I returned home to read Theology, and study the duties of my intended profession. With my mother I found the cause of my present unhappiness—the lovely Charlotte. In apologizing for my conduct, it will be necessary to describe the person who has occasioned it. Charlotte is in her nineteenth year; of the tallest of middle sizes; her shape is elegant; her appearance altogether inexpressibly winning and attractive; her mien is commanding, though not forbidding, there are both sweetness and grandeur mixed in it. Her face is beautiful; her eyes brilliant and piercing; the smiles that play about her mouth are bewitching; her fine hair is suffer'd to fall in easy ringlets on her neck; the unaffected innocence of her whole deportment, inspires one with a pleasing

ing awe, mingled with the purest delight on beholding her: *non formosa sed forma ipsa* may be justly applied to her. My senses were all struck with the sight of her; and the music of her voice completed my ruin. Shall I tell you that I found it ineffable pleasure to gaze on her? It was rapture to listen to her. I knew not why I was so happy in her company, for I did not suspect my truant heart could harbour a passion or a wish that did not tend towards my Louisa. Charlotte was the daughter of a very particular friend of my mother's, who requested her, on her death-bed, to assume the care of her daughter, whose purity was like the new-fallen snow in all its brightness and lustre, and whose ignorance of the world might lead her into misfortunes that would be fatal to her. The lovely maid had ever a great regard for my mother, whose conduct to her was so endearing, that she found another

ther parent in her. She had been left in good circumstances; and a handsome sum was appropriated for her support in our family. The excessive grief she had been plung'd in began now to disappear; a languor, a pleasing melancholly remained, which, though it banished gaiety, yet inspired the most delicate sensations. If these charms appeared so bright to me, a stranger, ignorant of the virtues of her heart, or the goodness of her understanding, what were my emotions when time opened both to my enraptured view! The son of Mrs. Thompson, whom she so much loved, must also share her esteem. We began to live like brother and sister.—Fatal intimacy! Dangerous familiarity! Opportunities were afforded me every hour to touch her hand, to hear her speak, to walk with her, to join in several innocent amusements, and she discovered hourly new attractions. They were too powerful for me to withstand. I yielded

to the torrent that carried me away, nor had I strength to oppose it. A letter from Louisa, charging me, in the gentlest terms, for neglecting to write to her, expressing her apprehensions that illness only was the cause of my silence, and lamenting her absence from me in the most affecting manner, woke me from my delusion. To what horrors did I awake! I was not yet grown so callous to the feelings of honour, of gratitude, and conscience, as to neglect answering her letter. But my imagination suggested Charlotte as the object to whom my tenderest expressions were addressed; and as I wrote, my guilty hand trembled at the perfidy of my heart. The impulse of returning love to the generous, the worthy Louisa, was too strong to be withstood. I began to consider the situation of my heart. I could not forget the vows of unalterable affection which I had made, nor could I banish from my remembrance her kindness and  
good-

good-nature. I reproached myself for abandoning the heart of a woman, with whom I had used every art to persuade her to return my passion, and whom I had every reason to believe lived only for me. I was so fully convinced of my ingratitude and baseness in thinking of any other woman, that I abhorred the picture I had drawn of myself in my own mind, and a firm resolution to adhere to the vows that I had made to Louisa, so truly deserving to be beloved, was the consequence of my reflections. Those reflections, alas! were not of long continuance, no more than the resolutions which were the consequence of them. The presence of the much-admired Charlotte banished them. She returned to my eyes more lovely than ever, and I became more enamoured. But do not imagine that I could suffer quietly the invasion of Louisa's rights in my heart. The remembrance of what was due to her, of  
my

my promises and my asseverations, returned on me, nor would they suffer me to rest. My duty and inclination were at variance, nor was there any apparent possibility how they could be reconciled. I grew melancholy, shunned society, and particularly avoided Charlotte. She took notice of the change, and was concerned at it. My mother attributed it to my return from your house, and the great regard I had for you.

“ We will endeavour to make him for-  
 “ get Stanton hall,” said the too charming  
 Charlotte Gainsby. “ Is there no amuse-  
 “ ment, no entertainment here that can  
 “ supply the place of your beloved pupil ?  
 “ Come, you shall be my master, and I  
 “ will be your scholar. You shall teach  
 “ me to read my native language with  
 “ propriety, and a manly justness.”

“ Ah,” said I to myself, “ my destruc-  
 “ tion approaches by quick and unavoida-  
 “ ble steps !” To her I remained silent.

“ You



“You see, madam,” resumed the lovely maid, turning to my mother, “how cheaply your son holds a female scholar, and especially so heavy a one as I am like to be. He will not be plagued with me.”

These doubts overcame my resolutions.

“Ah, you judge too hardly of yourself, Miss Gainsby, and oblige me to convince you how ready I am to do you any service in my power, by undertaking that employment, with pleasure, which you desire I should accept. But I cannot think you want any improvement, and my instructions will be consequently useless.”

“I will soon convince you to the contrary,” replied she, pulling a book out of her pocket, and reading these lines from one of Pope’s Pastorals.

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along.

For her, the feather’d choir neglect their song,

For her, the limes their pleasing shade deny,

For her the lillies hang their head and die.

Ye flow’rs that droop, forsaken by the spring,

Ye birds, that left by summer, cease to sing,

Ye

Ye trees that fade when autumn heats remove,  
Say, is not absence death to those who love ?  
Go gentle gales, and bear my sighs along.  
The birds shall cease to tune their ev'ning song,  
The winds to breath, the waving woods to move,  
And streams to murmur, ere I cease to love.  
Nor bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,  
Nor balmy sleep to lab'ers faint with pain,  
Nor show'rs to larks, nor sunshine to the bee,  
Are half so charming as thy sight to me.

The harmony of that celebrated poet's numbers, was improved by the music of her voice, the justness of her pronunciation, and the sweetness of her manner. Shall I tell you that I sat speechless—astonished—every faculty suspended, and my whole soul starting from my eyes, or dwelling on the delightful sounds that issued from her lovely lips. I was no less enchanted than Adam was at Raphael's relation, as Milton has described it.

The angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he a while  
Thought him still speaking, and stood fix'd to hear.

Thus

Thus I remained as if still listening to her: the potent sounds yet vibrated on my ear, and captivated my soul.

“Why do not you inform me of my errors, Mr. Thompson. Are they so many that you are unwilling to discourage me at first.”

“You cannot mean what you say. You must be sensible, that there is not room for improvement; and I should pay a very bad compliment to my own understanding if I pretended to correct you.”

“I foresee,” returned she, “that I shall not reap much benefit from the instructor who uses flattery. You will find fault enough with me soon.”

For three days I was obliged to listen to her, and no sooner did the enchantment of my senses cease, than my heart paid the tribute due to love, to honour, and Louisa. My life was a perpetual warfare, an eternal conflict. My senses involuntarily enslaved, sacrificed every thing to  
Charlotte's

Charlotte's beauty. My heart, sensible of the merit, the affection of Louisa, acknowledged her empire. This struggle could not be long supported: my spirits were considerably affected, and my health suffered. I was confined to my room near a week. In the hours of solitude and illness I had leisure to form resolutions that I fancied I should have strength of mind to preserve. My absence from the fatal object of my adoration, the cause of my woes, gave me time to consider my situation, and suffered my passions to cool. My senses were no longer inflamed with the lustre of her eyes; nor did the sound of her voice throw me into those delicious reveries which I could not avoid indulging in her presence. I promised to return to my duty, and discharge those vows I had made in the fulness of my heart to Louisa. As my mind grew calm, my disorder abated, and I found myself recovering very fast. When I was able to go out,

which

which was in a few days, I determined to surprize my mother and Charlotte, who were both together in the garden. They were seated in a little arbour, round which the jessamine and woodbine wound their shoots, and shielding it from the rays of the sun, showered united sweets. At a little distance were some knots of flowers, where my mother, who delights much in gardening, had

In the horrid bramble's room

Bade careless groups of roses bloom.

Thick myrtles shaded the entrance of this bower, in which Charlotte, more charming than ever, more sweet than the most fragrant produce of the earth, was placed—another beauteous Eve in a little paradise. As they could not perceive my approach till I was close to them, I overheard their conversation, which was about me. Charlotte expressed the greatest anxiety for my recovery. I stood before her:

she

she started at the sight, and running towards me, congratulated me in the warmest terms on my coming abroad again. She led me to the arbour, and pressing me to sit down, enquired after my health with the most affectionate concern.

“ This is a day of festivity,” said she; “ and I have read somewhere it was a custom to crown one’s friends with flowers on such an occasion ; let me prepare a wreath for you.”

She ran to perform the agreeable task, and soon returned with a chaplet on her own head, and another in her hand which she put on mine. I obeyed the impulse of my inclinations at that moment, and pressed her delicate hand to my lips as I returned her thanks for the trouble she took. I ventured to look up at her, and found her face covered with blushes. What were my sentiments at that moment !—Shall I confess that I forgot those resolutions for a moment that I so vainly imagined I had



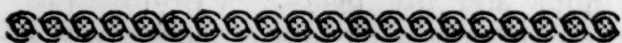
fortified my heart with. Ignorant of the pain she gave me at the fatal conflict she had stired up in my heart, she renewed her assiduities to raise my spirits, and render me chearful. She attributed the languour that appeared in my countenance to my illness. Little did she know that she was the occasion of that illness. Again I felt my bosom glow, again the fever of my mind returned. The grateful remembrance of the kiss I had given her hand, remained yet on my lips. It was the taste of water to a man perishing with thirst, who languishes and pines till he imbibes a full draught. Her innocence had afforded me many opportunities of indulging my fancy, in being more familiar with her person than any body else could be; but I avoided the dangerous temptation. Are you not tired of this description, tedious to you, but too interesting to me? I know my error, I see it, but cannot shun the cause of it. I am unhappy without remedy:

medy : my resolution to adhere to the duty I owe Louisa, is not sufficient to oppose the fascination of my senses ; every time I look at Charlotte my conscience accuses me with a breach of faith to Louisa ; nor can the delight I receive from the conversation of the lovely maid, compensate for the horrors I feel from the accusation of my heart. I cannot escape from the net that entangles me, nor have I power to fly from the destruction of my honour and my peace. I would rather die than abandon Louisa—and can I live without Charlotte ? Thus am I situated : and so circumstanced, can I pretend to advise you how to act, when on the brink of violating every tie that should be binding to man. Let the rectitude of your own heart, not so weak as mine, nor the sport of contending passions, direct you. If you will afford me pity, for I am sure you are interested in my future welfare, you shall hear how I go on. Instead of give

ing, I should ask advice. Do you then by your example, by your precepts support my tottering steps in the road of virtue, confirm my wavering heart in the principles of honour, and convince me of the truth of the maxim I have so often inculcated to you, That to be good is to be happy.

Yours ever and truly,

HENRY THOMPSON.



## LETTER. XXVI.

TO JAMES HILGROVE, Esquire.

**T**O what do you advise me, Hilgrove !  
to take advantage of the foibles of the woman whom I am to share my heart and spend my life with ? That vanity will be destructive of my future peace. It has already put a period to the inclination I was beginning to conceive for her. Has she

she not already thought favourably of Sir Edward? Has he not won her heart? and should I even succeed with her, sure she cannot forget the moments of soft endearment that have passed between them; and for my part

I wou'd chuse to scramble at a door,  
 Make my loath'd meals out of the common basket,  
 With dungeon villains; wallow in the stews,  
 And get my bread by pois'ning my firm limbs,  
 Ere pass an hour with her I have espoused,  
 If, but in thought, consenting with another.

I will therefore decline making my addresses to her. But Sir Edward supported by Apgill has so far prevailed upon me, that I am to pretend an esteem for Mrs. Adderley. The regard I have for Sir Edward's interest has principally persuaded me to this; for though acquainted with her foibles, he loves her too well to part with her. It is not want of delicacy in him. It is the ever-ruling fatality of an unhappy passion which he cannot conquer.

I know, my dear Benson, he has said to me that her temper and inclination lead her to desire adoration. Marriage may cure her: and if it does not, I who know her disposition shall not imagine her conduct is actuated by worse motives than it really is. But to me who have long loved her, and who have been flattered with the pleasing hope of a favourable return, there is something so charming in her person, and so lovely in her manner, that I should be wretched if I was deprived of her. Thus the infatuated man talks: shutting his eyes upon real imperfections, in hopes that imaginary good qualities may in time reconcile him to his situation.

“We can find no woman,” added Sir Edward, “without foibles; and one had better take her for wife with whom you are already acquainted, than undergo evils you know nothing of, or be at the trouble of investigating a new character.”

“But

“But how are you sure that you shall  
“be successful by my pretended partiality  
“to Mrs. Adderley, For though I would  
“wish to serve you, even at the expence  
“of my sincerity, yet it is not so clear  
“to me that Miss Mitcombe will fall  
“into the snare we are so busy in laying  
“for her.”

“Trust me,” said he, “for the success  
“of our scheme, and your coolness to  
“Emily. Her cousin is her rival. She  
“hates, though she cannot avoid being  
“civil to her. When she finds that you  
“take more notice of her cousin than  
“herself, she will naturally endeavour to  
“pique you, by appearing more attached  
“to somebody else than ever; for she will  
“not suffer herself to imagine she has  
“been slighted, or at any rate to seem  
“concerned at it. I will be in the way,  
“and taking advantage of the moment  
“of her anger, will obtain such conces-  
“sions as she shall not be able easily to  
“depart from.”



He proceeds in your steps, Hilgrove, and I am made an agent to promote his success. May it be happy to him. The execution of this design was not to be delay'd. I went accordingly to Sir Thomas's house, and Mrs. Adderley was there. There is something very engaging in the widow. She has eyes sparkling and extremely lively. Her whole figure is genteel, and she is handsome; but in a different stile of beauty from the fair Emily. I beheld the lovely girl with pity, with compassion, and taken up with endeavouring to find out the cause of her behaviour, whether from vanity, whether from a bad education, or from the ruling passions of the sex, I almost forgot the purpose of my visit. Must I confess to you, that Emily, with those faults, was still lovely: and what would she have been if not tainted with that desire of admiration? The thought of the misery her husband must suffer from her conduct, if

if possessed of any feeling, obliterated the traces of her beautiful form from my imagination, and I recovered my reason. There was company at the Baronet's, and chance placed me by Mrs. Adderley. I had already taken a resolution in what manner to act; how far to proceed to behave consistent with honour, and not to endeavour to inspire a woman with a passion I had no inclination to return. But I was greatly embarrassed in what way to put that resolution in practice. How have I envied the effrontery of the flip-pant nonsensical fools I have heard prattle, with such ease, such happy assurance, and in the most absurd manner. Custom bestows that habit of speaking in public, and enables them to act with as much unconcern as if in private. I cannot shake off that blushing troublesome modesty which renders me disagreeable to myself, and awkward in public. Mrs. Adderley relieved me from this dilemma,

by drawing me into conversation. We chatted about indifferent subjects for a good while, and our talk had the appearance of particularity. I desired only the appearance, for the realities were to be shunned. This gave Emily some disquiet, for she took an opportunity of interrupting us, and gently reproached me for having been absent so long. I made a trifling excuse, and returned to renew the conversation with the widow. As she passed me she gave me a look of contempt, which I well understood, and continued still engaged with Mrs. Adderley. Cards, the natural employment of the polite, employed the principal part of the company, all indeed but the widow and I; nor could her cousin's frequent invitations to her to take her cards, and other attempts, make her quit me. There is a great deal of good sense and sprightliness in the widow: and really her discourse gave me much pleasure, and en-

I .

tained

tertained me agreeably. I have reason to imagine that the attention I shewed, and the civilities I paid her, were not displeasing to her. I asked permission to wait on her at her apartments, which was not denied me; and I promised to pay my respects to her very shortly. I don't imagine that much of this conversation escaped Emily, for she seemed more attentive to us than the game she was playing. Sir Edward did not fail to be with me the next morning, and seemed highly satisfied at the progress I had made, and proposed that I should endeavour to get Mrs. Adderley's consent to accompany me to some public place. There was to be a concert the next night, and I was to wait on her with tickets. They were accordingly procured, and I went to enquire after Mrs. Adderley's health. I found her in an elegant morning dress, with so much studied negligence, that I was persuaded she expected me. My reception

ception shewed that she was glad to see me, and the conversation naturally turning upon her cousin. I could perceive that she threw out several invidious reflections against her, and confirmed Sir Edward's opinion that they were not a little jealous of each other. The concert was introduced among the other topics of conversation, that employed the hour I remained with her: and the offer'd tickets were immediately accepted, and I promised to wait on her to conduct her to the rooms. On my return home I found an invitation from Sir Thomas Mitcombe to dinner the next day; and waiting on him in pursuance of it, I found Sir Edward Wilmington there before me. His looks shewed that he had not as yet found any favourable alteration from the projected scheme.

"You will make one of our party to the new comedy to night, I hope," said he: "Miss Mitcombe has praised it much, and we are to see it this evening."

I re-

I replied coldly that I had the happiness of presenting Mrs. Adderley with some tickets for the concert, and intended myself the honour of waiting on her, and could not disengage myself. A visible alteration took place in Emily's countenance. It was increased by Apgill, who happening to be there, added, that he was sure I should spend an agreeable evening, as Mrs. Adderley was a sensible woman, and for his part, there were few whom he would prefer to her. Sir Edward rallied him very politely on his opinion, and made several happy allusions to Miss Mitcombe, which were favourably received. Dinner being served up put an end to our conversation, as the want of room must to this letter. Adieu, and believe me your friend,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER



## LETTER XXVII.

To Miss SEATON.

**M**Y wishes are fulfilled, my dear Susy. I have triumphed, and the dear Benson will be mine! Imagine, if you can, my joy, and the peevish Emily's chagrin at this disappointment. They are not to be described. His eyes, at length, have done justice to my charms, and he submits to them. He shuns the company of my cousin, and devotes himself to me. Sir Edward Wilmington and Emily had made a party to see the new comedy. Mr. Benson refused to accompany them, and presented me with some tickets for a concert that was on the same night. His presence only makes that harmony which would not have been so to me without him. In the middle of the entertainment,

tainment, who should appear but Emily, her aunt, and Sir Edward. She soon singled me out: her countenance sufficiently explained her sentiments, and the cause of her changing her mind, and not going to the play. I enjoyed her uneasiness, and was in part revenged. When the concert ended, we went to pay our compliments to Emily. She received us very coolly, discoursed much with Sir Edward, and in a more familiar manner than I had seen her even speak to him before. This was, no doubt, to pique Benson, who did not seem to pay much regard to her coquetry. Our conversation, you may suppose, was not of any long continuance. Mr. Benson handed me to my chair, and attended me home. The next day I went to Sir Thomas Mitcombes's which was not a very agreeable visit to Emily, who nevertheless received me with politeness, and had resolution  
enough

enough to conceal her vexation ; nor did she utter a single reproach. How great was our mutual dissimulation on this occasion !

In the evening Mr. Benson came according to his promise, to drink tea with me. His conversation, though it did not turn on the topic I hoped and expected it would, yet was pleasing. Why is he so cool in his manner ? Why does he differ so much from the rest of his sex ? A modern fine gentleman would have told you how inexpressibly charming you were in the tenth part of the time this lovely fellow is paying you a distant compliment. Yet he is more pleasing than the unmeaning blockheads who are eternally repeating the same thing over again. It is with us as the other sex, who follow the cold and coy, and shun the forward and inviting. Yet if I can give any credit to the information of his eyes, I shall soon receive

receive the tribute of his heart. He had seated himself near me, and was chatting in the most agreeable manner on the occurrences of the preceding evening, when Emily came into the room.

“ I beg your pardon, Mrs. Adderley, for  
“ disturbing you ; but I really thought you  
“ had been alone, and so came up stairs  
“ without any ceremony. But I see you  
“ are particularly engaged, and am very  
“ sorry for having interrupted you.”

“ There is no occasion, Miss Mitcombe:  
“ we are not so particularly engaged that  
“ your presence can interrupt us.”

She accordingly staid to tea, and treated poor Benson with the utmost contempt. He observed it, and was more attentive to me than ever I had seen him. This behaviour did not fail to alarm and vex Emily. But to prevent our enjoyment of each other, she resolved to sit him out. At length he retired, promising to call on me in the  
morn-

morning, to take a turn or two in the Park if the weather was fine. Emily remained but a short time after his departure, said little, and seem'd buried in thought.

When I was left to myself, you may imagine I enjoyed her uneasiness, and resolved to spare no means of compleating my conquest. More than the desire of revenge may animate me, for he is worth all the trouble I may take to catch him. Let me but secure him, and I am happy. But am I not at this moment doing what I may repent of? I scarcely know this young man: and the good character Emily has given me of him, joined to his personal qualifications, have made this impression on me, and given me this bias. But I gratify my revenge, and, I fear, indulge the sentiments of my heart in listening to him—Where it will end I know not. It is in his absence only that I can reason thus, for he charms me too much, when I see

LORD STANTON. 235

see him, to think in this manner. Heigh ho! I would not, for a diamond necklace, that he knew the power he has over me. Farewell, dear Sukey, keep your heart from love, and you'll be happy.

Your's,

ARA. ADDERLEY.

The END of the First Volume.